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ACADIAN CULTURE CENTER

VOLUME 3

HAMILTON
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ARCHITECTS

3-525889

THE CAJUNS: THEIR HISTORY AND CULTURE

HAMILTON AND ASSOCIATES
A Professional Architectural Corporation
Opelousas, Louisiana

Jean Lafitte National Historic Park
New Orleans, Louisiana

This Research was conducted through Contract NPS: CX8029-7-0004 between the National Park Service and Hamilton and Associates for the Acadian Culture Centers planned for Lafayette, Eunice, and Thibodaux.

July, 1987

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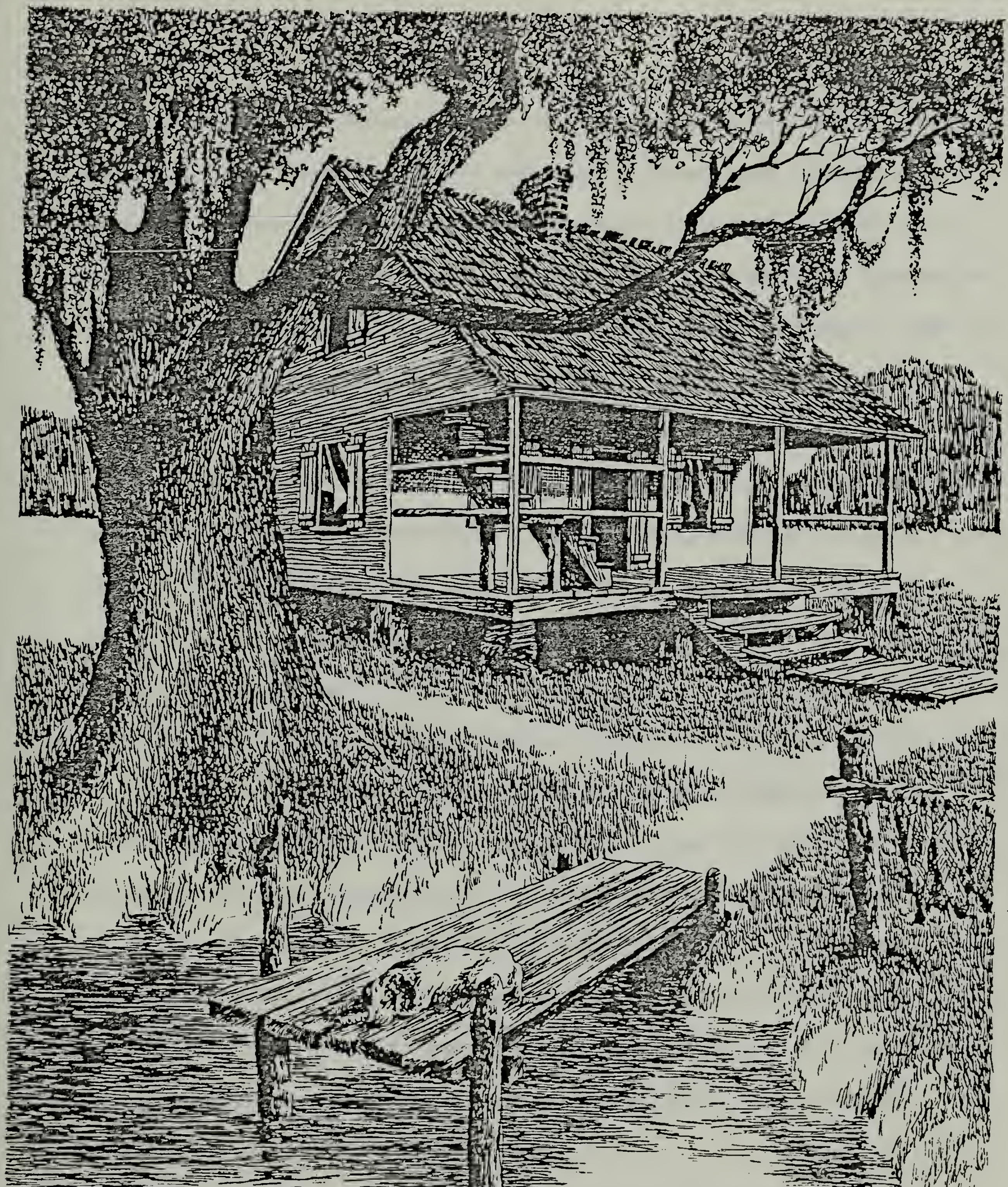
VOLUME THREE

PART VII	ACADIAN MATERIAL CULTURE
PART VIII	FOODWAYS
PART IX	LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS
PART X	THE PRESENT: ECONOMY AND CULTURE CHANGE

PART VII ACADIAN MATERIAL CULTURE


FLOYD SONNIER '78
CATAHOULA CAJUN

THE ORIGINS OF ACADIAN ARCHITECTURE

Jay Edwards

The origins of Louisiana's Acadian vernacular architecture is a subject little investigated and imperfectly understood. History has conspired to eradicate most of the evidence normally available to the architectural historian. Moreover, the lives of the Acadians themselves in the period preceding settlement in Louisiana were so chaotic that it is extremely difficult to identify specific sources of architectural influence. We are left with little more than a series of educated guesses about the genesis of the Cajun house. It is possible, though, to identify the general sources of cultural influence and to narrow the range of possibilities to a managable level.

The Houses of Acadie

Some facts about the settlement of Acadia are relevant in the evaluation of early Acadian architecture. The area along the Bay of Fundy (Baie Française) was isolated from the rest of French settlement in eastern Canada. There was little contact between the Acadians and the Québécois. The settlement histories of the two regions were distinct. The St. Lawrence communities became the principal focus of French commercial activity and colonial development. Acadie remained an isolated cultural and economic backwater witn only a few hundred families spread out over a large area.

Acadia was also, for all practical purposes, isolated from France. These had been little augmentation of the Acadian population since 1671

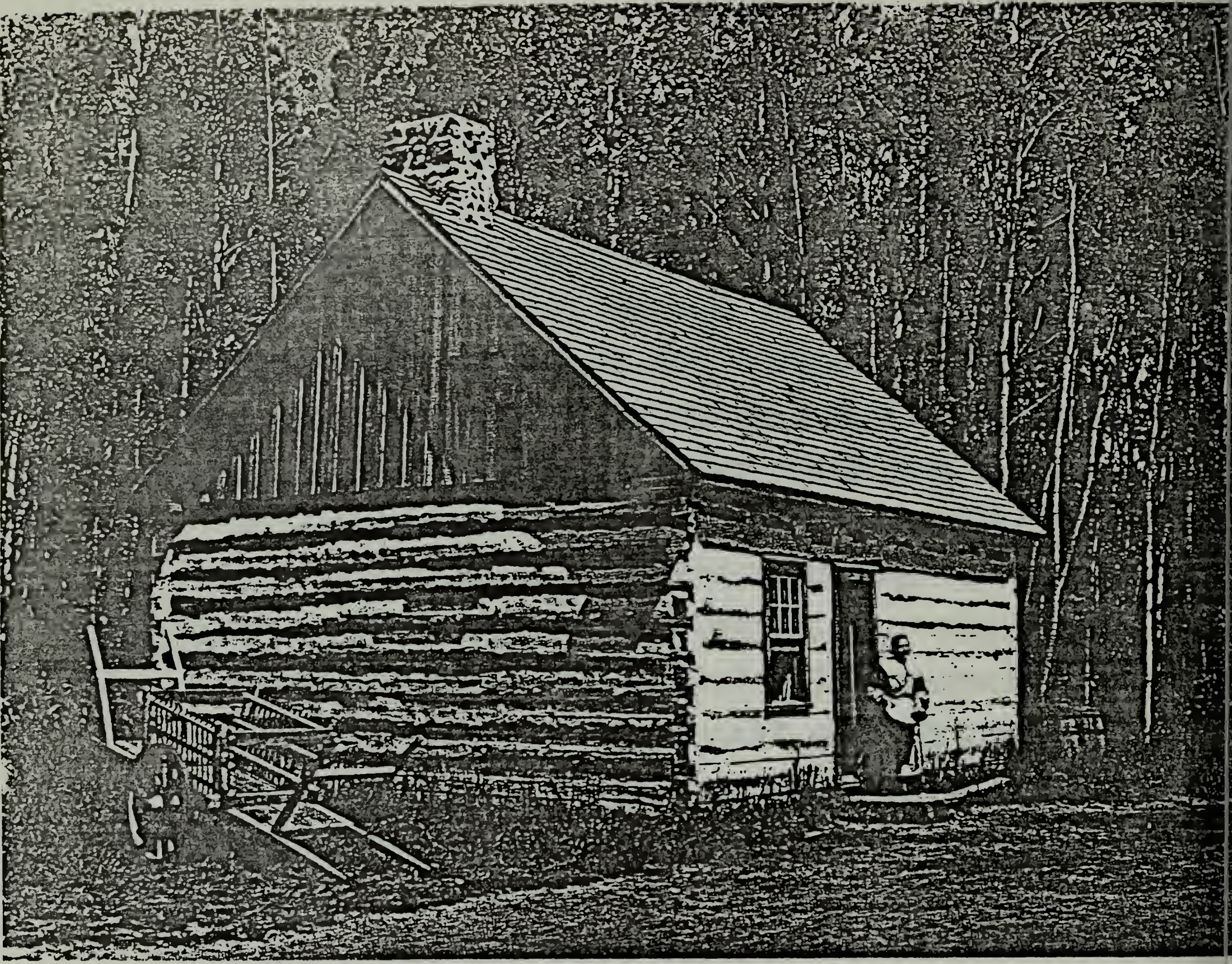
(LeBlanc 1963). For all practical purposes, Acadia had remained an isolated enclave, preserving elements of the culture of rural Western France of the first half of the seventeenth century. The perspective and goals of the Acadians differed very shaprly from those of French colonial interests in the area. The French governors of Acadie considered the Acadians too independent to be good citizens. They refused to pay taxes or to submit themselves to local authority, and worst of all, they traded with the despised English in New England.

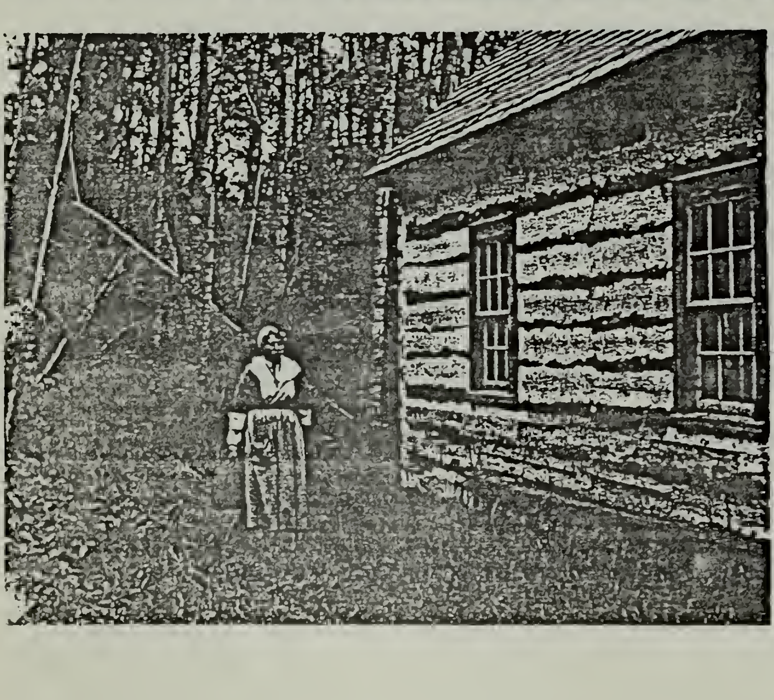
The economy of colonial Acadie differed from that of the St. Lawrence communities and Newfoundland. Exports--furs and fish were not the most important commodities of the Acadian economy, although both were apparently plentiful. Rather the Acadians were agricultural and pastoral people who exploited the rich soils of the tidal marshlands of the Bay of Fundy. They grazed large herds of cattle and grew prolific crops of hay, fruits and vegetables. Their settlements were permanent and adapted to the geography of the tidal flats where their farmsteds were located. There, stone was not available.

Even the climatic situation in Nova Scotia is significantly distinct from that of Quebec. Quebec is colder in winter. Acadie is warmed by the surrounding Atlantic Ocean. The first French settlers of Quebec underwent an extremely painful process of acclimatizing to the almost unbearable cold between December and March. Many died before they discovered how to survive the Québécois winters by surrounding their houses with thick stone walls. This same acclimitization process seems not to have effected Acadian architecture so severely. True, Acadie was still colder than Poitiers, and accommodations had to be made. It appears that the principal accommodation was the construction of a relatively small but well built house with a large fireplace to heat the salle.

Buildings with wooden walls provided sufficient insulation for the Acadian typical settler. It is clear that all of the early Acadian houses were constructed of wood. The British soldiers under Lawrence were ordered to burn them down in 1755. Today, not even the foundation of an original Acadian dwelling survives. The British troops did their work with complete efficiency. Had stone walls been common, some evidence would certainly survive.

Of the sixteen thousand Acadians living in Nova Scotia and southern New Brunswick in 1755, about half were under British jurisdiction (LeBlanc 1973: 526). Approximately seven thousand of the Acadians living in British Novia Scotia were exiled. The remaining thousand escaped the British dragnet and fled north across the Chignecto Isthmus into New Brunswick. Because of this there is a high possibility of a continuation of Acadian cultural heritage in New Brunswick. Many Acadians sought new homes in places along the eastern coast; Matapedia, Bathurst, Caraquet, Tracadie, St. Louis, Cocagne, Memiarcouk and elsewhere. Others moved up the Rivière St. Jean (St. John's River) to settle at Madawaska at the northern tip of Maine in 1785. In these remote places they resettled their families and constructed new "foyers" (homes). A few of the early Acadian houses built at these places survive. Others have been preserved in the Village Historique Acadien in Caraquet. Restorations have been constructed in places such as Port Royal. An examination of these structures provides a general,





MAISON MAZEROLLE - CIRCA 1842. Certaines régions acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick eurent plus de difficultés que d'autres, et l'isolement persista plus longtemps. C'est ainsi qu'au Village des Mazerolle, en arrière pays de Fredericton, on retrouve encore des maisons de pièces sur pièces du milieu dix-neuvième siècle.

MAISON MAZEROLLE - CIRCA 1842.
Arrière de la maison.

FIG. 1

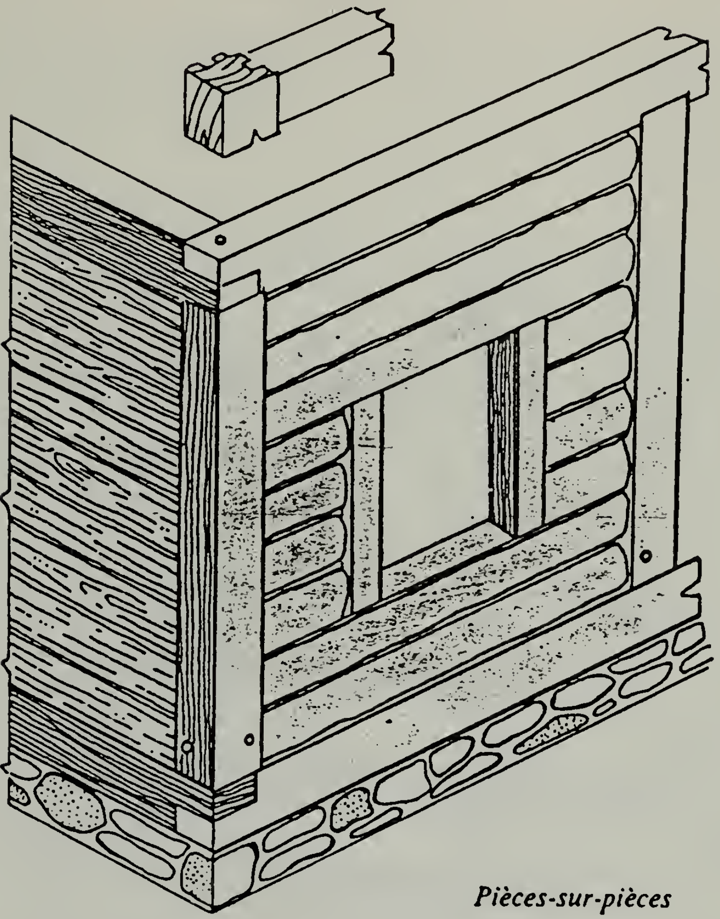
if not a specific, look at the original forms of Acadian domestic architecture.

The typical Acadian house was built in pièce sur pièce, or horizontal log construction. Two principal types of "piece on piece" were used. The first is called poteaux en coulisse. (Fig. 2A) A series of posts were mounted on sills, about four to six for each side of the house. Vertical grooves were cut into two faces of each post so that they could receive tenons from the planks or logs used as infill. Logs were dressed about four inches thick and between four and fifteen inches wide. The planks were cut just slightly longer than the inter-post distances and vertical tenons were cut into both ends of each. Each of these planks were slid vertically down between the posts, filling the inter-post bay with a horizontal surface (Fig. 2).

The other method of piece on piece construction employed only horizontal logs. After being hewn into a rectangular form, about four inches thick, pairs of logs were built up in crib fashion to form the walls. (Fig. 2B) Each log was fixed at the ends to those above and below it (intersecting at right angles) with full dovetail notching, called queue d'aronde (dove tail) or tet de chein (dog head) notching in French. The advantage of this method is that the notches on the ends of the planks are sloped in such a manner that each plank locks securely into those above and below it without the necessity of the use of pegs, grooves or tenons. In addition, the outward slope of the dove tail surfaces drains rainwater towards the outside of the wall, retarding leakage and rot. About the only disadvantage is that the method requires careful fitting by a person trained to do it. It is a

FRENCH PIECE SUR PIECE CONSTRUCTION

A. Poteaux en Coulisse



Pièces-sur-pièces

B. Queue d'aronde (tet de chein)

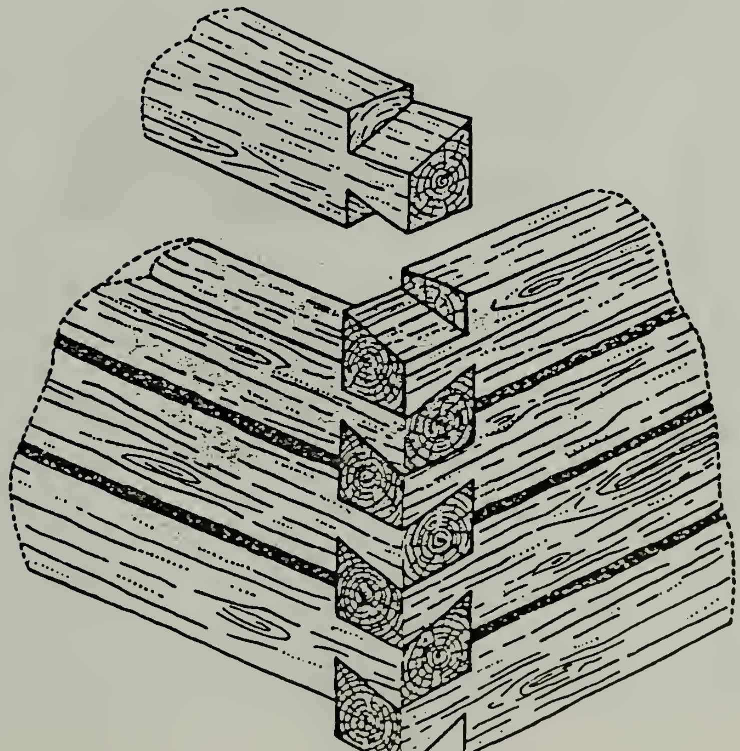
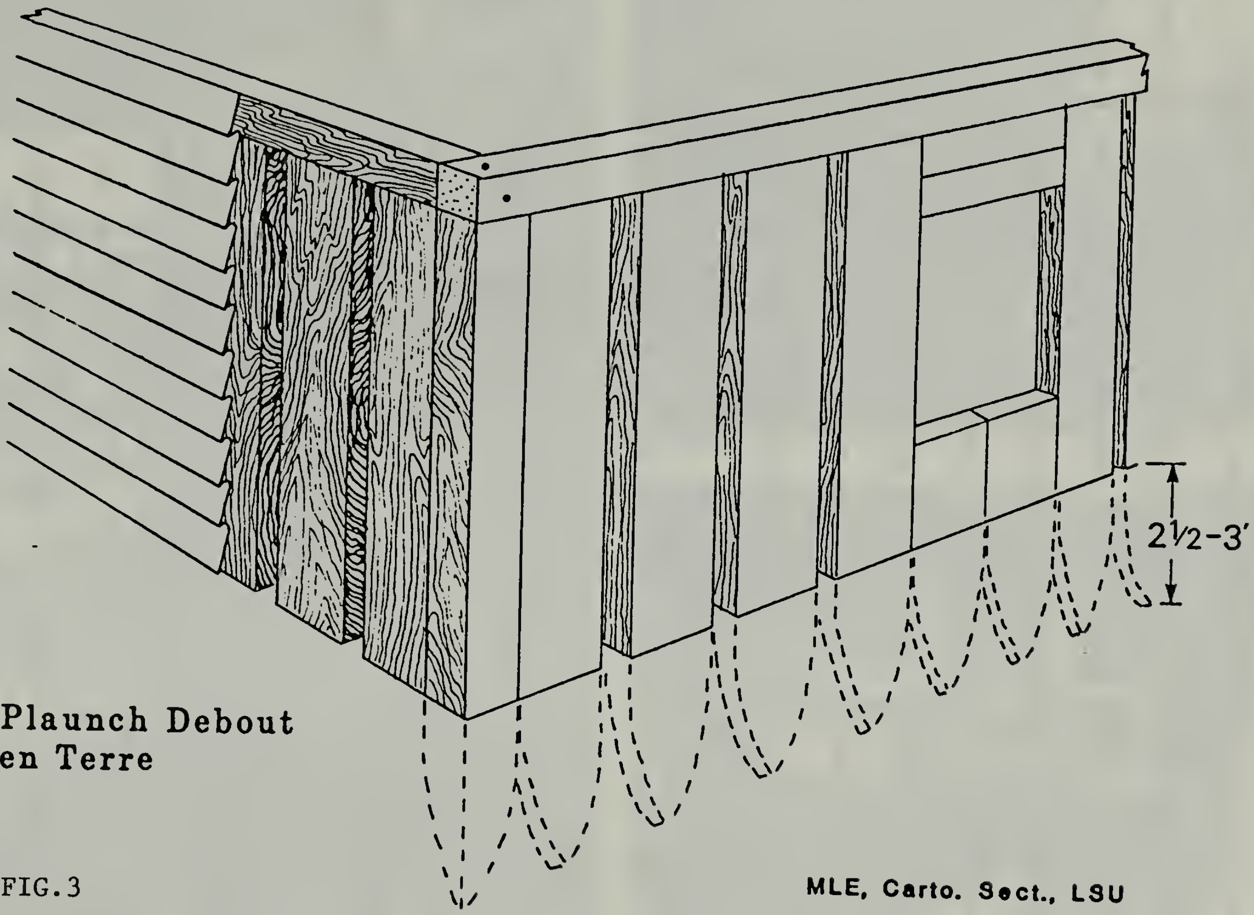


FIG. 2



Plaunch Debout
en Terre

FIG.3

MLE, Carto. Sect., LSU

time consuming job, but satisfying aesthetically and long-lasting if done correctly.

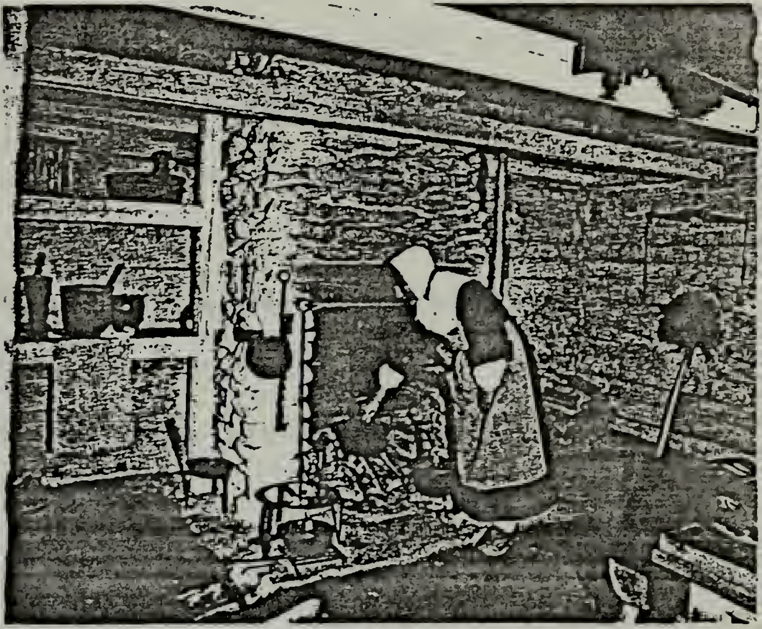
The form of the pre-diaspora Acadian house seems to have been relatively standardized. It took the form of a rectangular box, longer on the front by 30 to 50% than on the side. We have reason to believe that the native Acadian house was comparatively small by European standards. The width of the main rooms of the house may have been limited to only about sixteen feet for most of the population. The roof was gabled and pitched at 45% or higher. Roofs were generally shingled, though bark may have been used in earlier forms. Shingles or clapboards were also used to cover the gabled end of the house and sometimes the exterior surfaces as well. The front door was located in the middle of the long side. In addition to the door, one or two windows were also located in the front of the house, depending on its size (Fig. 4) [Photo of Maison Martin, Village Historique Acadien, Ca. 1783]. Few windows were employed in the earlier houses, though in the nineteenth century, more were added.

The chimney was probably built of stone, though stick and mud chimneys were apparently also used. The chimney was located inside one of the end walls or in the middle between two rooms. Most of the early Acadian houses contained only one or two rooms. Of course, there were no galleries. The eaves of the Acadian house generally did not extend more than about six inches beyond the walls.

Most of the cooking was done in the fireplace. Bread was baked in an outside four à pain. This detatched structure consisted of a two foot tall, four foot wide vault or dome shaped oven with a door in one

MAISON MARTIN - CIRCA 1783. La Déportation avait sans contredit créé un recul en matière d'habitation. La maison Martin est certes un exemple frappant de l'habitation acadienne de la fin du dix-huitième siècle.

MAISON MARTIN - CIRCA 1783. Cette scène intérieure de la maison Martin ne représente pas la simplicité, mais bien la pauvreté du colon acadien suite aux événements de 1755. Le plancher de terre battue et le peu de mobilier sont des indices de la sévérité des conditions de vie que dû connaître l'Acadien en quête d'une patrie.



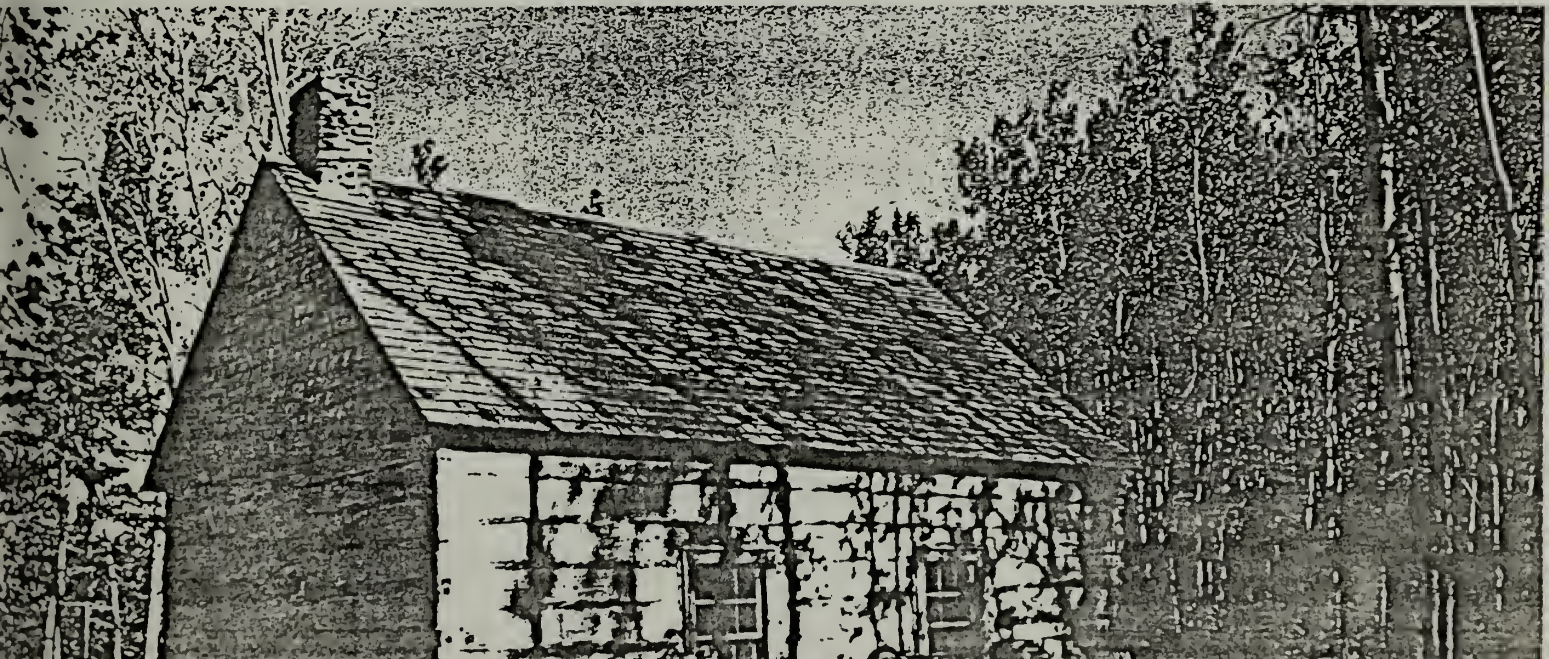


FIG. 4

end. The dome which was made of clay, was raised about three feet above the ground on a platform and was protected by a simple gabled roof open at both ends (Figs. 5&6) [Photo of French outdoor oven here] (Kniffen 1960). The outdoor oven was fired from inside. A fire was built in the oven, and tended until the entire oven was hot. At that point some of the charcoal could be raked out with a small rake. Bread was baked in iron pans. Long wooden spatulas were used to move the pans. Acadians also used other farm dependencies: stables, sheds, and barns. Of course each community had its church, and there may have been a few governmental buildings and, of course, commercial structures used by traders, merchants and fishermen.

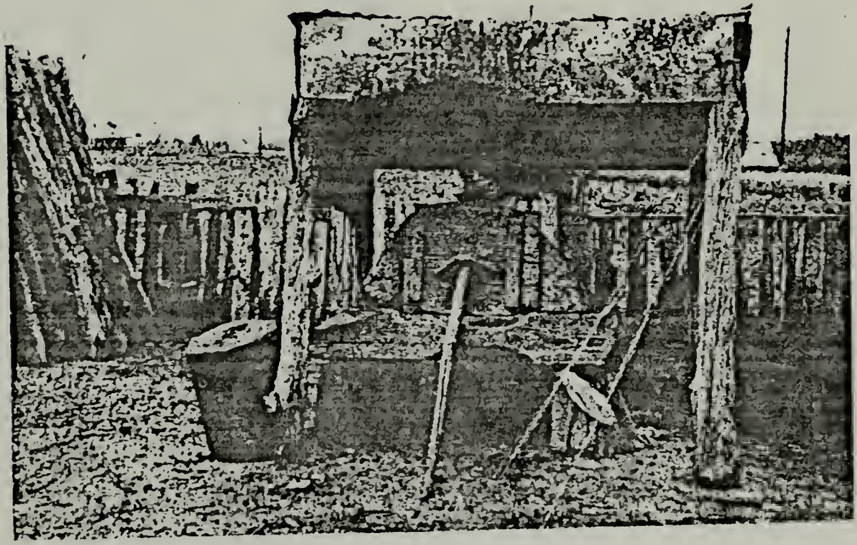
The Influences of Le Grand Derangement

Any attempt to follow the travels of the Acadians between 1755 and 1790 reveals that the history of Acadian "migrations" is undoubtidly among the most complex suffered by any people in a thirty-five year period. (Fig. 7) By the end of 1763, Acadians were located in almost all of the American colonies along the eastern seaboard. They were also to be found in various parts of Canada, in England, France, Cayenne, Martinique, the Falkland Islands in the south Atlantic, and in Saint Domingue (Santo Domingo). As many as 900 were successfully repatriated to Nova Scotia (LeBlanc 1963: 533).

ILLUSTRATIONS OF FRENCH OVENS

from Kniffen, 1960

Fig. 5—French Oven, Cut Off, Louisiana (1950).



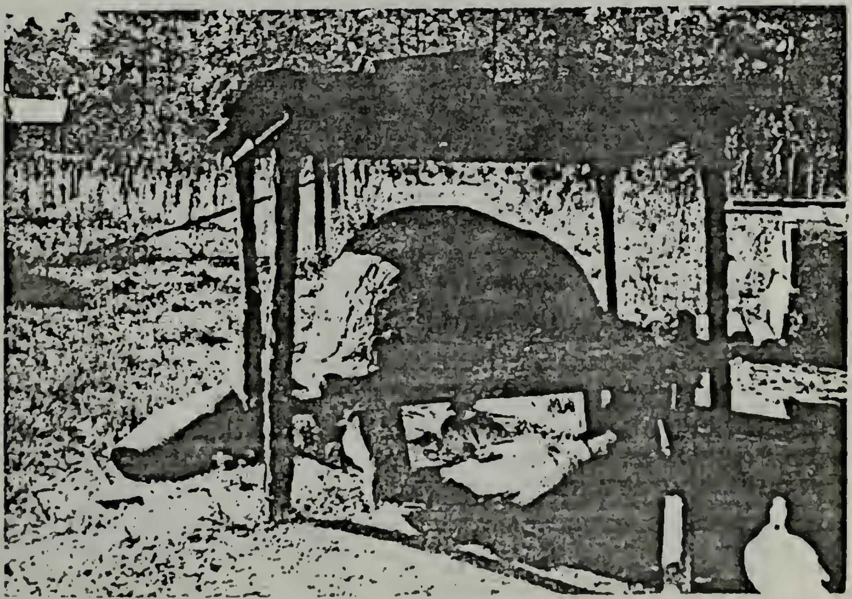
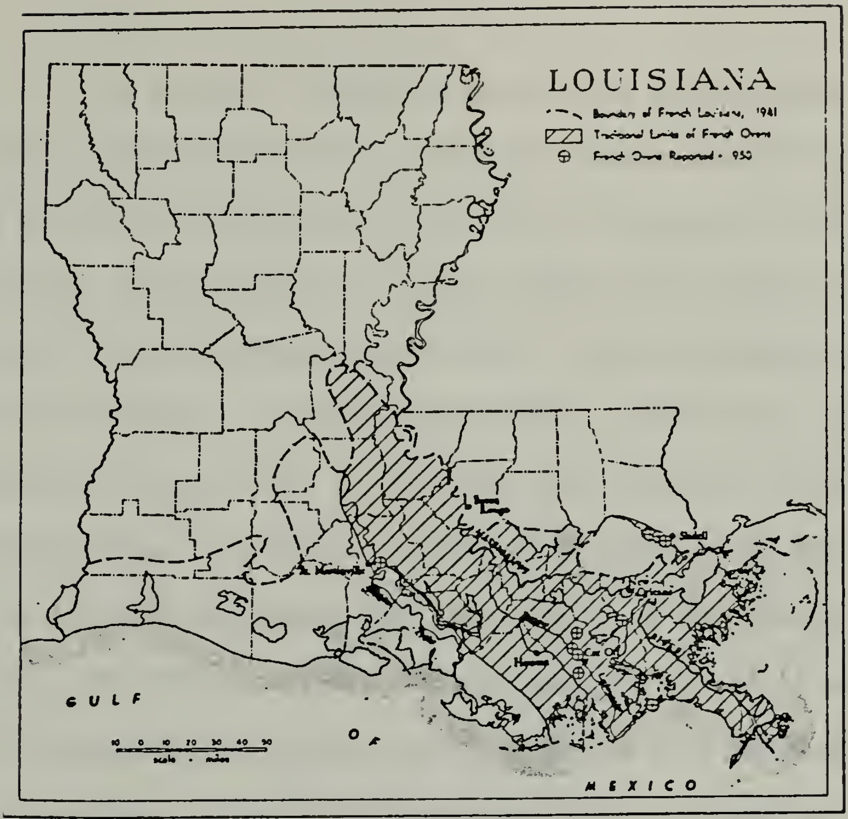


Fig. 11—French Oven, Slidell, Louisiana (1950).

FIG. 5

DISTRIBUTION OF THE FRENCH OVEN IN LOUISIANA


LOUISIANA
Boundary of French Louisiana, 1941
▨ Traditional Limits of French Ovens
⊕ French Ovens Reported · 950
GULF
OF
MEXICO
scale · miles
10 0 10 20 30 40 50

A FRENCH OUTDOOR OVEN IN QUEBEC

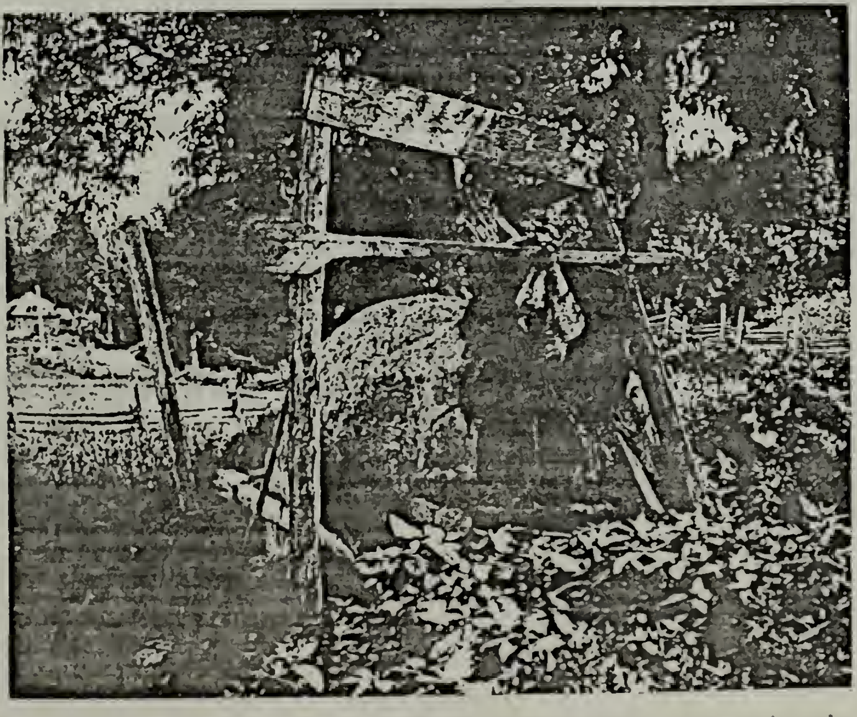


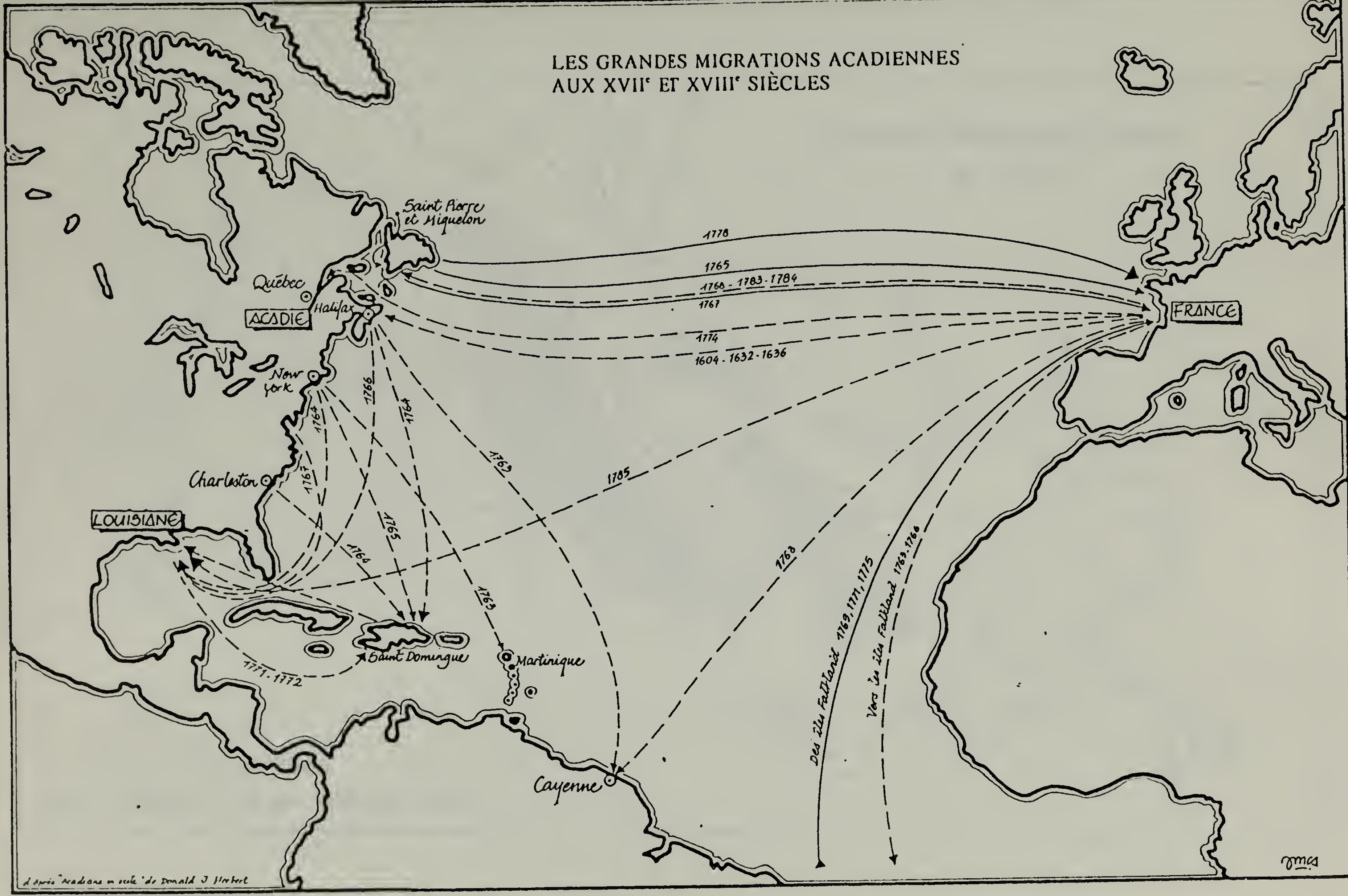
Fig. 8—French Oven, Quebec (ca. 1908). Note framework of roof covering, also pans, wooden hoe, and paddle. (Reproduced by permission of Keystone View Co.).

FIG. 6

The Earliest Acadian Architecture in Louisiana

In the years 1764-1765, a small number of Acadians arrived in Louisiana from the colonies of the eastern seaboard. It was not until February, 1765, however, that the first sizable group of two hundred and thirty arrived from Saint Domingue. Fortunately, they were received by the leaders of Louisiana's caretaker government Their desire to return to an independent agricultural way of life was recognized, and they were granted permission to settle on unused land in areas of the colony thought to be underpopulated. The first Acadians selected a site near St. Martinville, on Bayou Teche. As Acadians continued to arrive from the West Indies and the English colonies, they were settled in the Attakapas district, along the Mississippi River at Cabonocey, above the German Coast up to "Lafourche des Chetimachas" (Donaldsonville). They also settled on upper Bayou Lafourche, at New Galvez, near Manchac, around Baton Rouge, on Bayou des Écores (Thompson's Creek), and in Pointe Coupee and Opelousas(See Fig. 8). In all about three thousand Acadians are estimated to have arrived in the colony between 1764 and 1790. Probably over one thousand came from Saint Domingue, sixteen hundred from La Rochelle, Rochefort and Cherbourg in 1785 and '86, and the remainder from the English colonies(Fig.9).

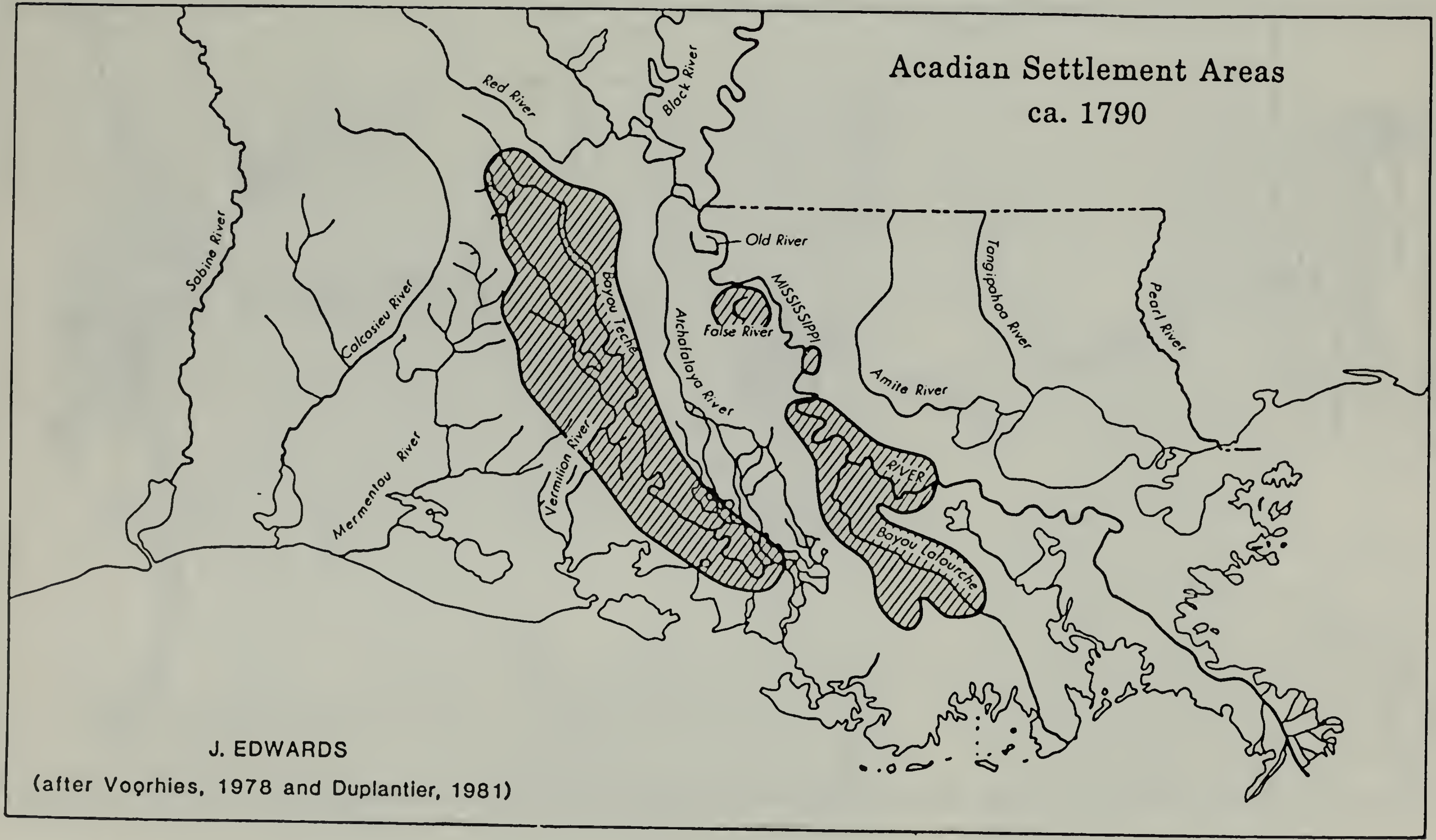
If nothing else is clear, it is certain that by the time the Acadians arrived in Louisiana, they were demoralized, brutalized and


LES GRANDES MIGRATIONS ACADIENNES
AUX XVII^e ET XVIII^e SIÈCLES
Saint Pierre et Miquelon
Québec
ACADIE
Halifax
New York
Charleston
LOUISIANE
Saint Domingue
Martinique
Cayenne
FRANCE
1778
1765
1766 · 1783 · 1784
1767
1774
1604 · 1632 · 1636
1766
1764
1764
1767
1763
1785
1764
1765
1763
1771 · 1772
1763
Des îles Falkland 1769, 1771, 1775
Vers les îles Falkland 1763, 1766
jmcs

d'après "Acadians in exile" de Donald J Hebert

FIG. 7

Les Acadiens - Mounier, Ed.

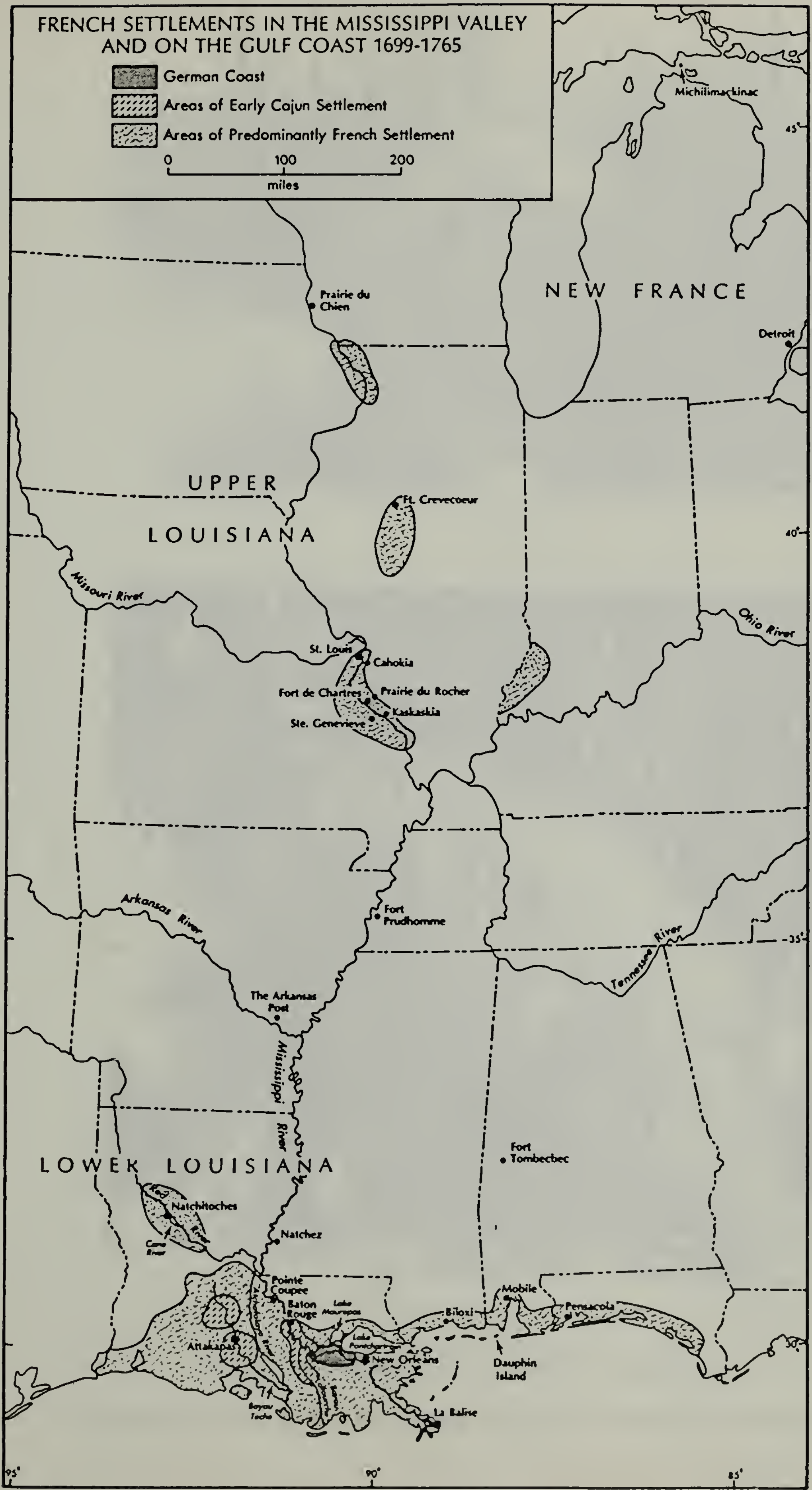


Acadian Settlement Areas
ca. 1790

J. EDWARDS
(after Voorhies, 1978 and Duplantier, 1981)

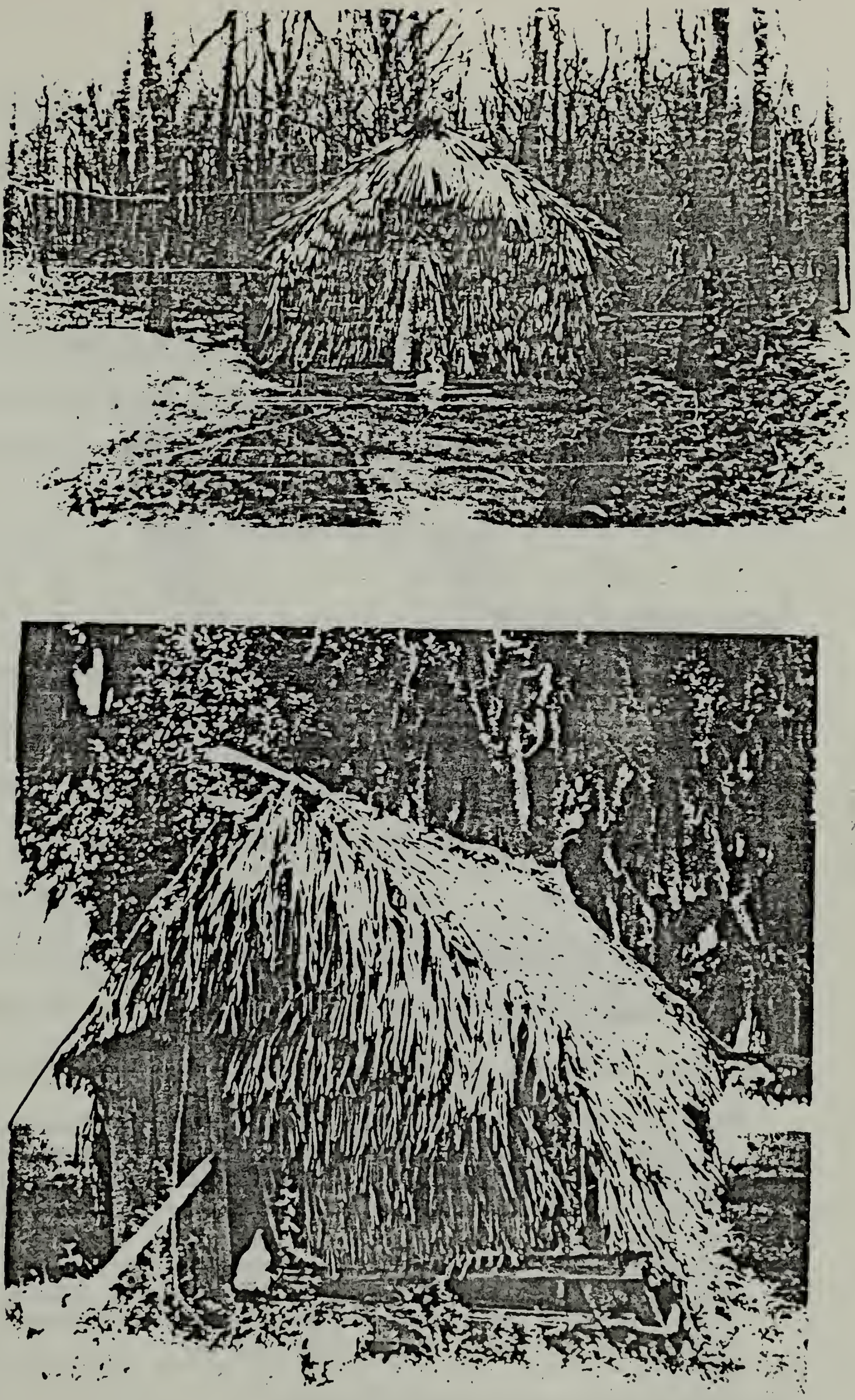
Sabine River
Calcasieu River
Mermentau River
Red River
Vermilion River
Bayou Teche
Black River
Atchafalaya River
Old River
False River
MISSISSIPPI
RIVER
Bayou Lafourche
Amite River
Tangipahoa River
Pearl River

FIG. 8


FRENCH SETTLEMENTS IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY AND ON THE GULF COAST 1699-1765
▨ German Coast
▨ Areas of Early Cajun Settlement
▨ Areas of Predominantly French Settlement
0
100
200
miles
Michilimackinac
45°
NEW FRANCE
Detroit
Prairie du Chien
UPPER LOUISIANA
Ft. Crevecoeur
40°
Missouri River
Ohio River
St. Louis
Cahokia
Fort de Chartres
Prairie du Rocher
Kaskaskia
Ste. Genevieve
Arkansas River
Fort Prudhomme
Tennessee River
35°
The Arkansas Post
Mississippi River
Fort Tombecbec
LOWER LOUISIANA
Red River
Natchitoches
Cane River
Natchez
Pointe Coupee
Baton Rouge
Lake Maurepas
Lake Pontchartrain
New Orleans
Attakapas
Bayou Teche
La Balise
Biloxi
Mobile
Pensacola
Dauphin Island
95°
90°
85°

CPD, Carto Sect., LSU

FIG. 9



PALMETTO SHACKS OF THE HOUMA INDIANS

(Probably similar to the first generation Acadian shelters)

FIG. 10

destitute. They had lost essentially all of their material possessions and almost half their numbers. Nevertheless, they retained their desire for a better life and their spirit of independence. They were granted livestock and simple

implements by the Spanish Governor. With these simple aids, they began the gradual and difficult process of conquering the landscape of the new Acadia. That process occurred in three basic steps. The first was the pioneering phase.

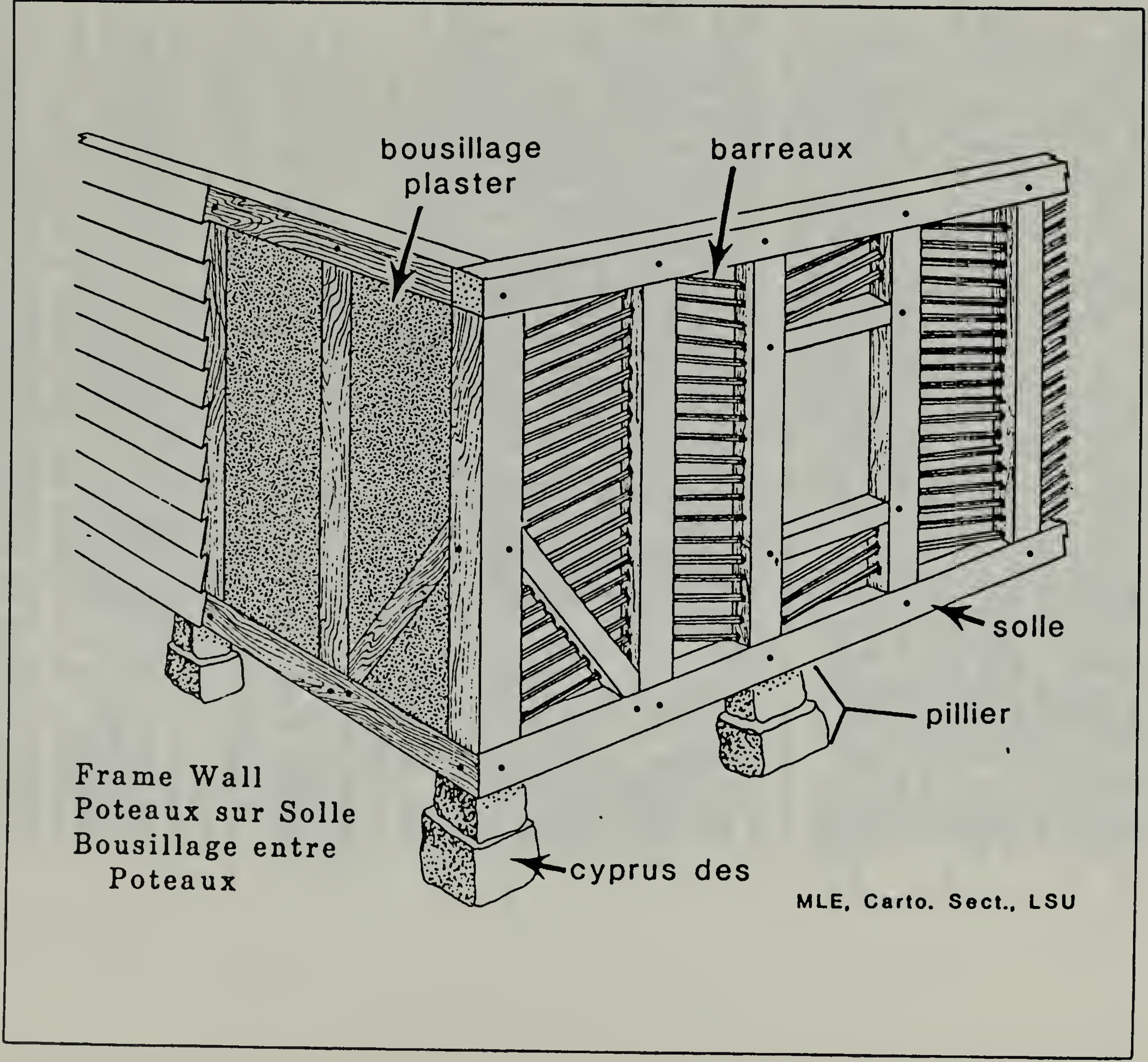
First Generation Houses

Wherever they settled, they engaged in subsistence farming and in lumbering, fishing, trapping, moss picking and hunting. Most constructed simple cabins for themselves. The first houses were clearly meant to be temporary structures. Many were thatched and walled with palmetto. Palmetto tents are recorded as having been constructed by the first settlers at Lafourche des Chetimachas on the Acadian Coast (Rushton 1979: 172-73). These cabins probably only lasted a few years. They were probably constructed after the style of the local Indian hut (SEE ILLUSTRATION).

> They set several posts in the ground at equal distances from one another and lay a beam or plate on tip of them, making thus the form of a house of an obliong square. In the middle of this square they set up two forks, about one-third higher than the posts, and lay a pole across them, for the ridgepole of the building; upon which they nail the rafters and cover them with cypress bark, or palmetto leaves. The first settlers likewise built their dwelling-houses in this manner... (Le Page du Pratz 1947:189-91).

The Second Generation Acadian Cottage

Within a few years, a new and permanent type of Acadian house was being constructed everywhere--the second generation Acadian folk


bousillage
plaster
barreaux
solle
pillier
cyprus des
MLE, Carto. Sect., LSU

Frame Wall
Poteaux sur Solle
Bousillage entre
Poteaux

FIG. 11

cottage. Most such dwellings conformed rather closely to a common model. As late as the year 1901, examples were still to be seen in the more isolated sections of Acadiana:

> Cabane was the name given in early times to all dwellings; it is still applied to those built in the ancient style. In Acadia, Canada, these are called loge and in the Antilles case. Houses in the old style still (A.D. 1901) exist in out-of-the-way places on Lake Verret, on the coast, in the great Attakapas and Opelousas prairies and in places where the soil is poor. These little huts dignified with the name of houses are built on blocks, or piers, twenty or thirty inches above the ground level. The wood is hand-sawed and squared with an axe in the woods, before being brought to the construction site. The building is normally fifteen by twenty feet, usually of only one big room, but sometimes partitioned or alcoved. The big chimney is built at the gable end. There are two doors and one or two windows. The walls and chimney are of bousillage, a mixture of Spanish moss and mud. The preparation is done with the help of friends and neighbors. Copious refreshments and a heavy meal cooked on the spot by the womenfolk are the reward for their service. The tâche is a square or round hole for making bousillage. The topsoil is stripped off with shovels. Then the hole is excavated with hand tools and the spoilage thrown to the side. At the bottom is laid a coating of "green" [uncured] moss and layers of earth are alternated with further layers of moss. Then the whole is watered so asto soak the earth. Then men called tâcherons, bare-footed and with trouser legs turned up, descend into the tâche, treading and crushing the mixture until it is of the consistency of mortar. It is then applied to the building frame by torches or double-handfuls. Where there is no Spanish moss, prairie grass or hay are poor substitutes.
>
> The wooden uprights of the building frame are indented [with shallow auger holes] at intervals of five or six inches to accommodate the batons (sticks or laths [barreaux]) which are placed between them. The batons are thus between two thicknesses of bousillage. When this is half dry it is smoothed with a shovel-blade, then allowed to dry completely, white-washed and then makes a strong and handsome wall, cool in summer and warm in winter.
> The roof is made of large pieces of cypress [merrains] split with the sledge-hammer and pegged to the rafters. The door-hinges and window fastenings and hinges are also pegged. The chimney is built like the walls, around four quenouilles de chemnée (literally, chimney distaffs), 4" x 4" wooden

uprights pierced like the colombes or wall uprights to receive batons and bousillage. Earthen chimneys were common in the 1840's but have tended to be replaced by brick.

There is no need of a lock; when one goes out, a chair keeps the door closed and informs the public that no one is at home. At the entrance, near the door, are a pail of water, a polished gourd beside it, with which to dip out the water, and a wash-basin or lavabo, set on a little shelf fixed to the wall, near which hangs a handtowel of locally-made cloth. The furniture consists of a cypress bed made by just about anybody, for all the habitants understand carpentry. There are also a cypress table and chairs upholstered with skins. There are stools and benches. The spinning-wheel for wool and cotton, the loom for weaving the well-known blue-and-red cotonnade take up much room. Roller-beds for the children (lits-a-roulettes) are low cots which slide under the big bed at morning and have sticks set up in each corner at evening to hold up the mosquito netting.

As one can see, this room [the salle] serves as kitchen, dormitory, and dining room. Here too the corn is shelled. Let us not forget the gun, an indispensable object on an habitation, hung horizontally over the door on two brackets whittled out in wood and nailed to the wall. From these also hang the gamebag made of chavi (racoon) skin. This contains the powerbag and other necessities of the hunt. The powder horn is in fact made of skin or cotonnade. The racatchias also hang here. (the meaning of racatchias is not clear. It is often used in Louisiana and Missisisppi to mean "burr." According to the glossary of the Breaux MS, it means a kind of spur. Neither seems applicable here, unless the association with hunting equipment is fortuitous--R.)

[The ratachia was an instrument used to retrieve the lead ball from the barrel of the gun after a mis-fire. It literally "spurred" or screwed into the lead ball].The gun is useful in hunting wild animals, killing mad dogs and slaughtering livestock as well as in defending the home.]

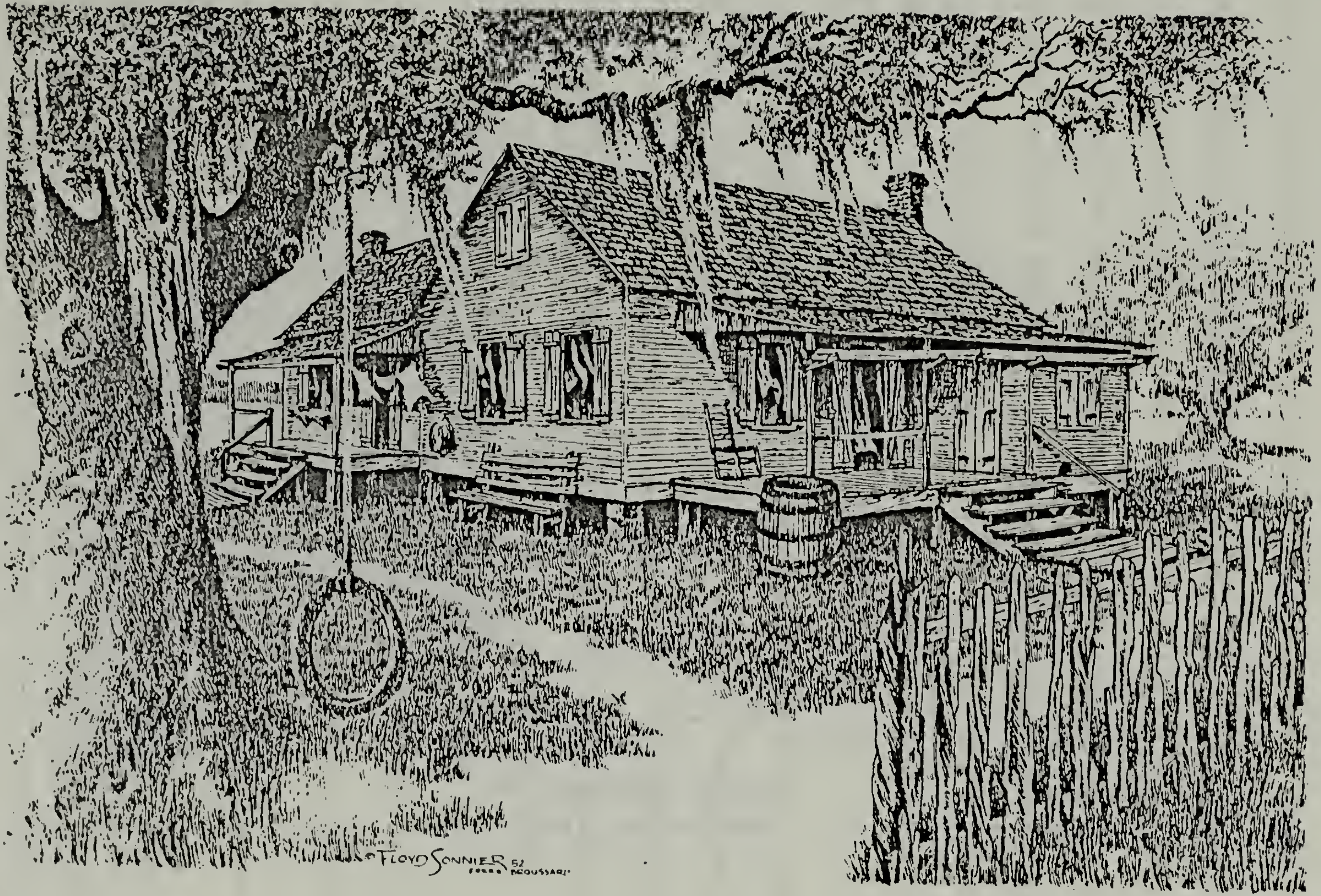
In recent years these small unhealthy houses are disappearing and giving place to houses which, if they do not offer all the comforts of city houses, give proof of greater ease and better taste on the part of the owner.

On entering a rural Acadian house, one is struck by the profusion of wall decoration. There are large and brightly colored prints, among them the family's patron saints, the Wedding of the Blessed Virgin, the Consolatrix of All Afflictions, the Good Shepherd, model of solicitude, carrying on his shoulders the injured sheep. There one sees the affecting story of Genevieve de Brabant. There are

> sketches from illustrated papers. The chimney walls are papered with all sorts of pictures, clippings from everywhere, badly trimmed, labels from cloth-bolts, liquor bottles, tobacco packages, perfune bottles. The panorama surrounds a statue of the Virgin, perhaps Our Lady of Lourdes, resting on an alter placed on a shelf near which hang a rosary and holy-water font.
>
> The moving of a house or building, called trainage, is characteristic of the Acadian country. The house is first placed on long pieces of wood called rances. These are set on the axles of large wagons. Oxen in sufficient number, harnessed to this kind of train, pull simultaneously. Whatever its weight, the house is sometimes dragged long distances. The trip is usually made without incident, except for breaking of the ox-teams' harness-chains. Bridges are thrown over smaller streams, ditches filled, fences taken down and rebuilt. Once at the new site, the building is again placed on foundation piers with great skill. It is in the Attakapas country that this trainage is most commonly performed. The labor force consists of volunteers and the operation costs the owner only a few gallons of whiskey, coffee, and an open-air meal (Reinecke 1966: 24-7).

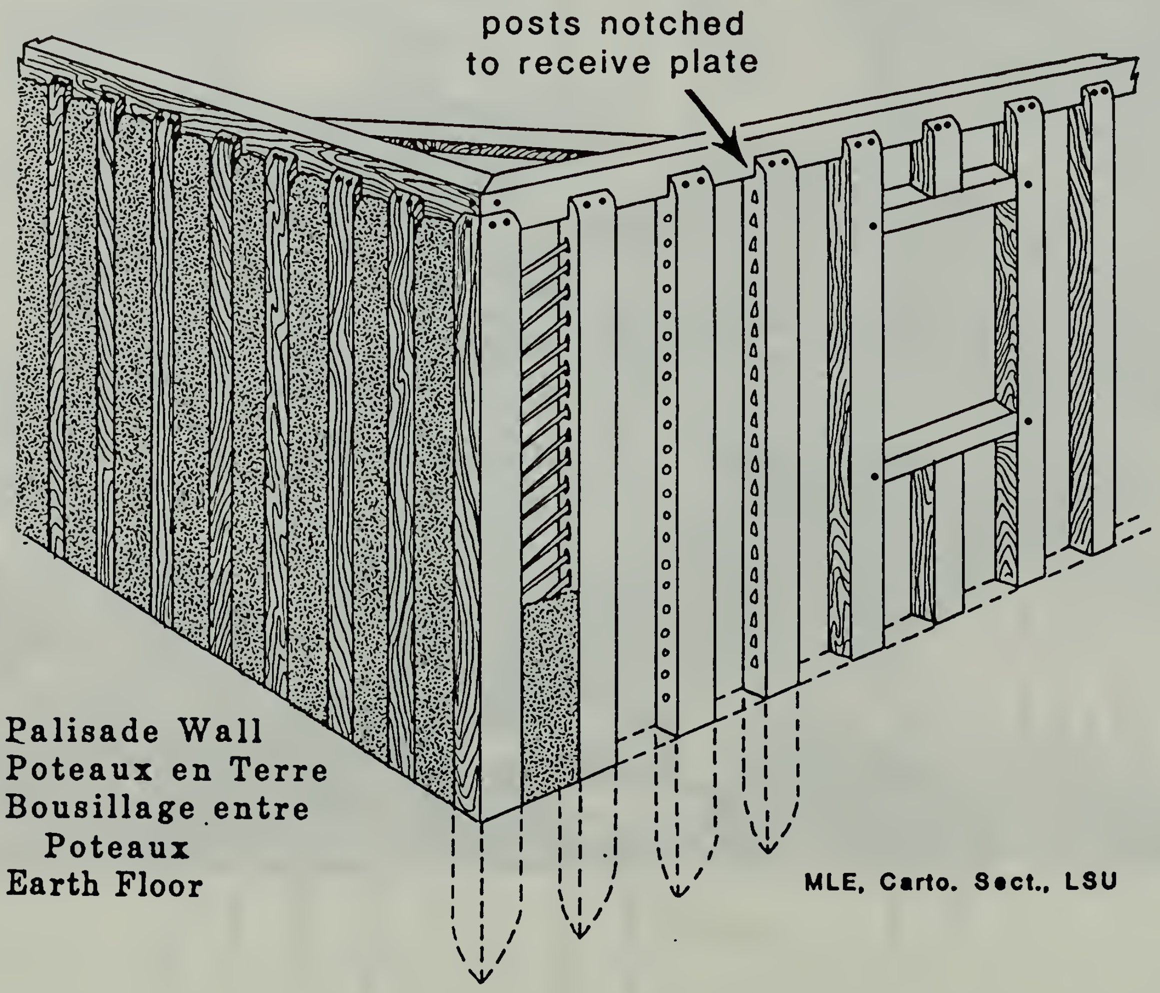
This extended quote from the anonymous Breaux manuscript provides an accurate picture of the second generation nineteenth century Acadian folk cottage of the eastern portion of Acadiana. One thing that is missing from the description of this house type is a gallery. It appears that many of the second generation houses were not galleried (Fig. 12). In other words, they were what we term, Class I houses. Probably the closest thing to a second generation Acadian Cottage surviving today is the Hypolite-Bordelon house in Marksville, though it is galleried.

In order to bring this description back to the last half of the eighteenth century certain modifications are in order. It is highly likely that a fairly high proportion of the earlier Acadian houses were built in the poteaux en terre method (Fig. 13), rather than as


© FLOYD SONNIER 52

A CLASS I ACADIAN COTTAGE ON THE UPPER TECHE, WITHOUT BUILT-IN PORCH

FIG. 12


posts notched
to receive plate

Palisade Wall
Poteaux en Terre
Bousillage entre
Poteaux
Earth Floor

MLE, Carto. Sect., LSU

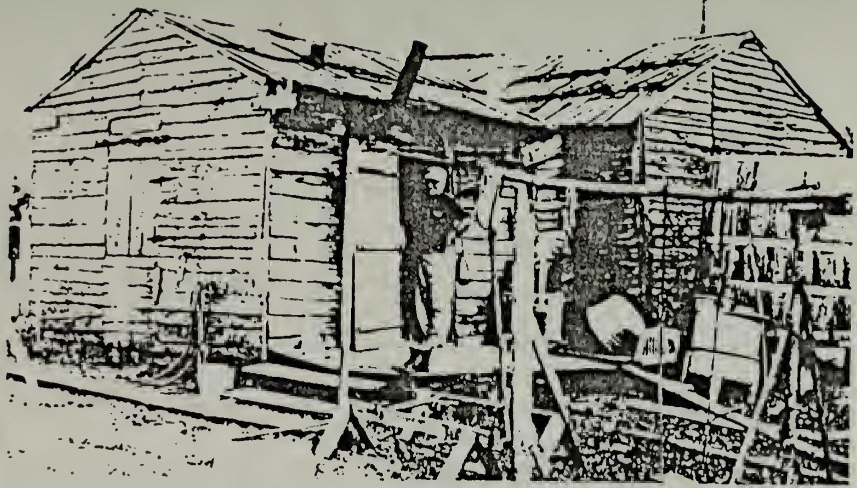
FIG. 13

described, poteaux sur solle, with the sill raised on blocks. "At the beginning the houses were constructed without floors, other than the aluvial soil of this region" (Marchand 1965: 84). Most Acadians adopted the use of raised sills sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. As late as 1827 inventories of Acadian properties on the Acadian Coast still describe the houses as poteaux en terre.

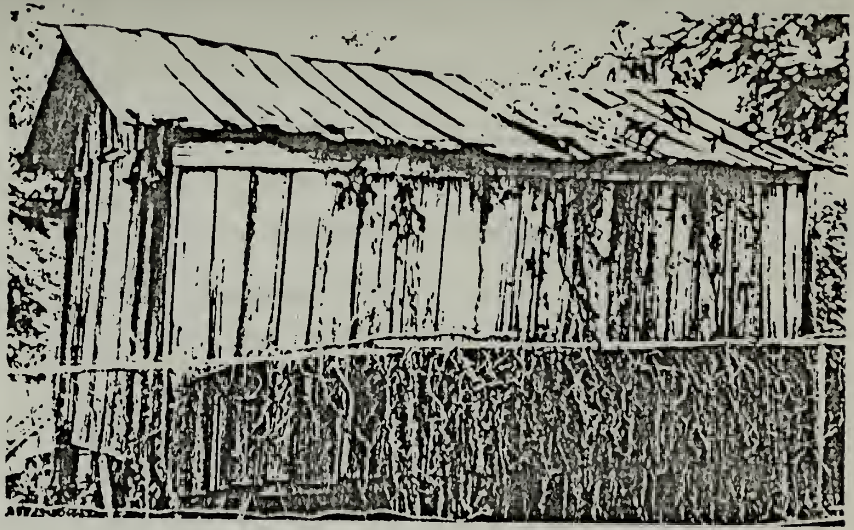
Neither were the early second generation Acadian houses built of bousillage entre poteaux sur solle. They were, rather, constructed of vertical posts or planks and covered with rough- hewn planks called pieux (Fig. 14).

Another interesting aspect of the descriptions of early Acadian houses is that they are generally said to have been small. We are fortunate that Sidney Marchand saw fit to record the descriptions of one hundred and fifty nine first and second generation Acadian houses from St. James, Ascension and Lafourche parishes (1943; 1965: 84-92). The legal inventories span the period from 1771 through 1803. They provide a useful data base for the study of first generation Acadian houses, since dimensions and features such as galleries are recored.

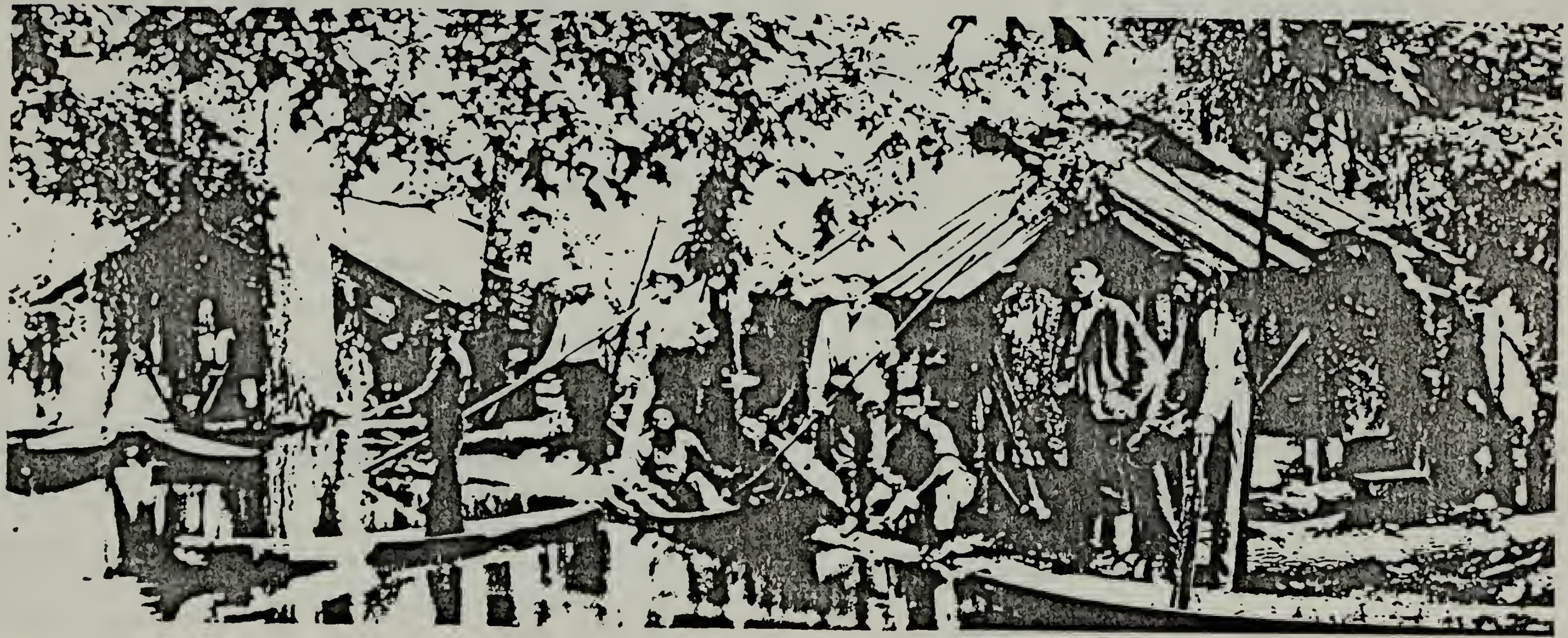
> Very poor, they [the Acadians] endured all manner of hardships, but, as the years passed, their homes and farms were improved. The more prosperous ones, after 1797, occasionally received The Monitor of Louisiana--the first newspaper published in New Orleans and Louisiana. In time some of the exiles built floors of pickets in their homes; then came small galleries, planked overhead. In time we find them building their cottages "on blocks," or pillars, and the walls were filled with a mixture of mud and moss which was placed between the posts. The exiles called it "bousillier entre les poteaux."



1. A home in Pierre Part constructed of hand-split cypress around a framework of young cypress trees.



2. A camp formerly used by swampers in the Atchafalaya Basin.



3. A swamper's camp as photographed by Coulon (1888, following p. 8).

CAMPS COVERED WITH CYPRESS BOARDS PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE 2nd GENERATION ACADIAN SHELTER

FIG. 14

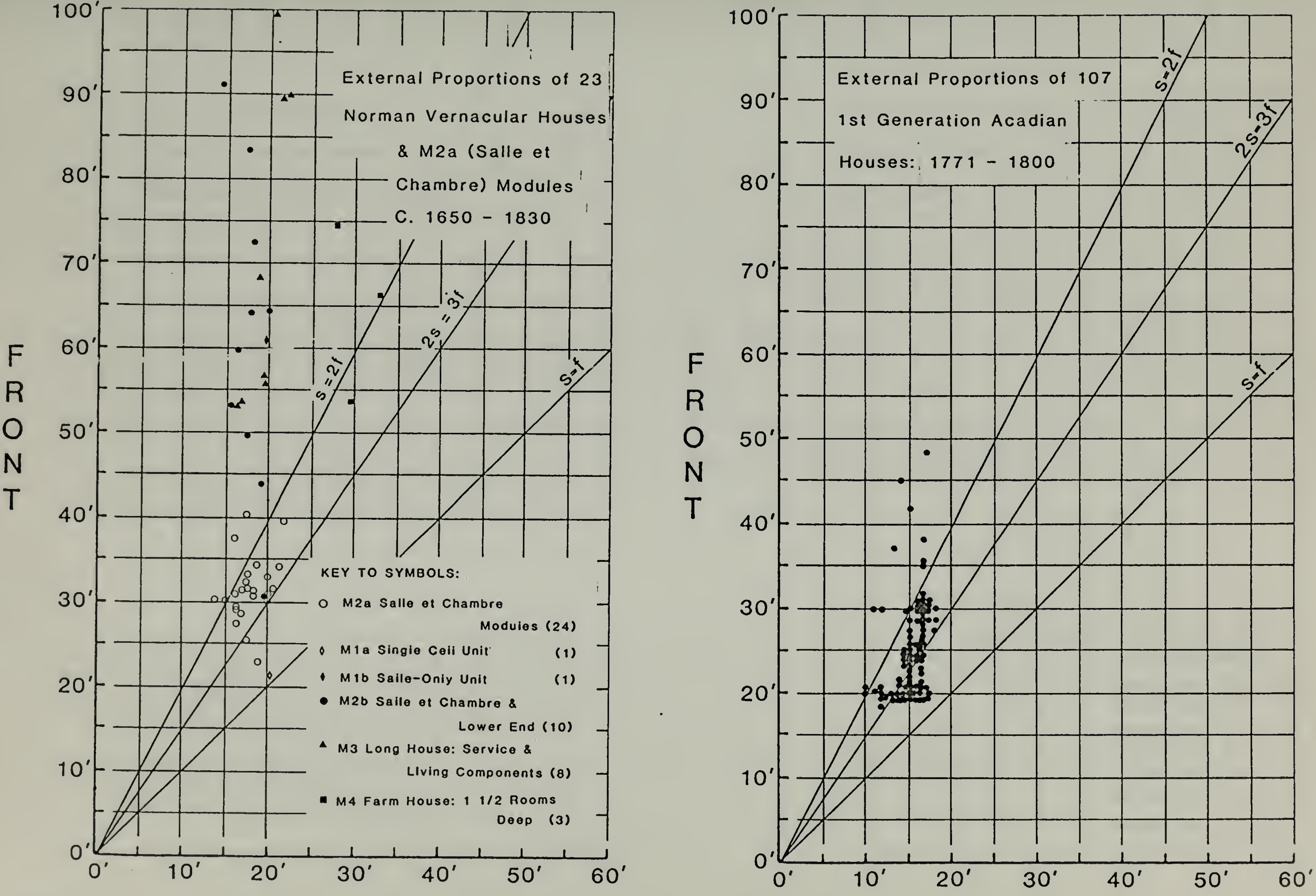

External Proportions of 23
Norman Vernacular Houses
& M2a (Salle et
Chambre) Modules
C. 1650 - 1830
KEY TO SYMBOLS:
○ M2a Salle et Chambre Modules (24)
◊ M1a Single Cell Unit (1)
♦ M1b Salle-Only Unit (1)
● M2b Salle et Chambre & Lower End (10)
▲ M3 Long House: Service & Living Components (8)
■ M4 Farm House: 1 1/2 Rooms Deep (3)
s =2f
2s = 3f
S=f
FRONT
0′
10′
20′
30′
40′
50′
60′
70′
80′
90′
100′
External Proportions of 107
1st Generation Acadian
Houses: 1771 - 1800
S=2f
2S=3f
S=f
FRONT

FIG. 15

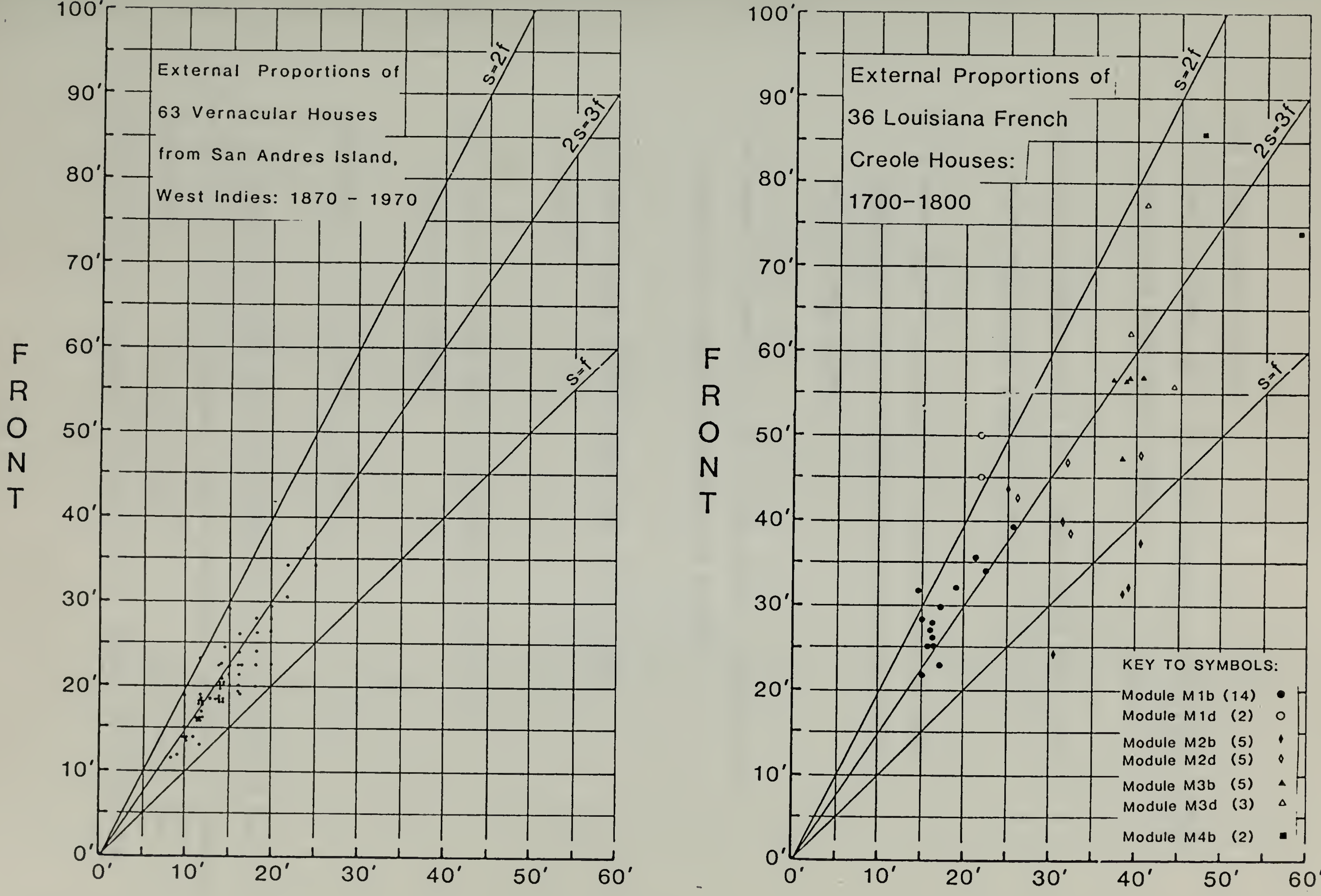

External Proportions of
63 Vernacular Houses
from San Andres Island,
West Indies: 1870 - 1970
FRONT
100′
90′
80′
70′
60′
50′
40′
30′
20′
10′
0′
0′
10′
20′
30′
40′
50′
60′
s=2f
2s=3f
s=f
External Proportions of
36 Louisiana French
Creole Houses:
1700-1800
FRONT
KEY TO SYMBOLS:
Module M1b (14) ●
Module M1d (2) ○
Module M2b (5) ♦
Module M2d (5) ◊
Module M3b (5) ▲
Module M3d (3) △
Module M4b (2) ■

FIG. 16

Some typical descriptions;

1771 House on ground, 20′ x 14′, front gallery, surrounded, covered and floored with pieux [planks].

1773 House on ground, 22′ x 16′, planked above [roof] and below [walls] with pickets [pieux].

1776 House of posts in ground, 25′ x 15′, gallery on both grand faces [front and rear] covered and floored above and below with pickets.

1780 House on ground, 20′ x 10′, front gallery, covered with boards, surrounded and floored with pickets.

1790 House of posts in the ground, 30′ x 15′, with galleries.

1802 house, 26′ x 16′, built on blocks, two galleries, covered with pickets.

1803 House, 35′ x 41′, brick chimney

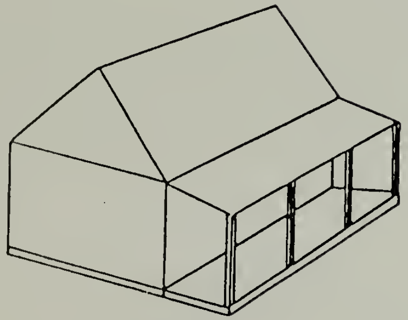
If one plots the length and width dimensions of one hundred of the eighteenth century Acadian houses, a rather surprising pattern is revealed. The houses conform to a well defined pattern. They range in width from ten to seventeen feet. The length of the house little effects its width--just the opposite of the pattern we seen in the Creole base module. Rather, as the Acadian house grows in length (by adding new rooms to the ends), it grows almost no wider (Fig. 15). This pattern is so strikingly different from the Louisiana Creole pattern that one cannot help but speculate upon its significance (Fig. 16).

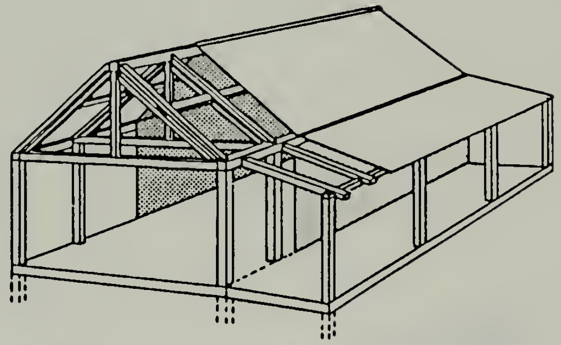
It appears that the Acadians were uncomfortable in a house with rooms wider than about seventeen feet and that their ideal was a room about fifteen feet in width. Can it be that their years of living in huts and shacks in exile had shaped their spacial preferences in architecture, or is it perhaps a legacy of the cold Acadian north? Another explanation is that what we are seeing laid out on the Louisiana landscape is the Medieval French long-house in miniature. Between the eleventh and the seventeenth centuries, peasants in many parts of Western France lived in a long house--a building only one room deep but many rooms wide. Like its ancient Germanic progenitor, the Long House functioned as a combined cow house, hay barn and residence for humans. As these houses grew in length, they did not grow in width at all. They remained one room deep until well into the fifteenth century when wealthier landholders expanded the Norman Long House into a building one and one-half rooms deep. Peasants, however, continued to build long houses until well into the eighteenth century.

Given these descriptions together with what we know about Acadian architecture from studies of surviving houses, it is possible to reconstruct the appearance of the second generation Acadian house (Fig. 17).

SOME CLASSES OF CREOLE VERNACULAR HOUSES

I

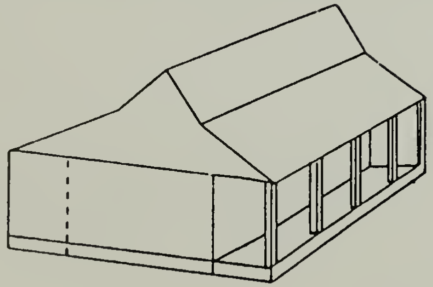


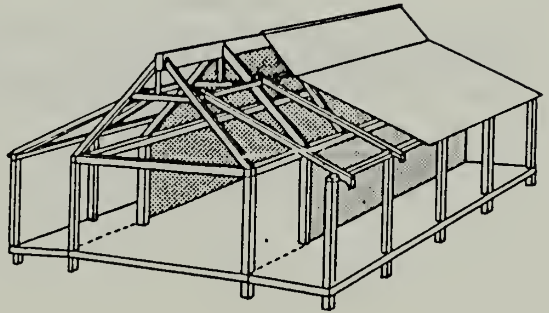


CLASS I

Single-pitch roof. Truss system includes the use of a king post and a double rafter system. Rafters set on wall plate. Inner rafters (truss blades) set on tie beam. Gallery optional. If present, gallery rafters tied into wall plate or front wall, and supported by an outer gallery plate, which is itself supported by light weight colonnettes.

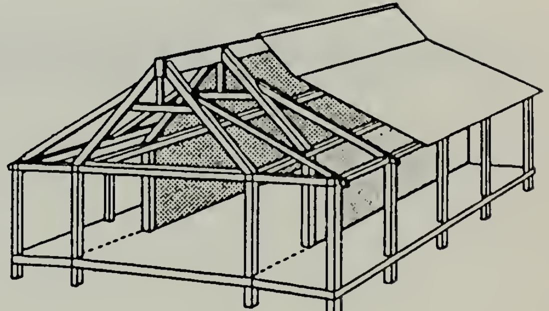
II





CLASS IIa

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (early form). Gallery always present. Gallery rafters notched over principal purlin and supported on outer gallery plate.

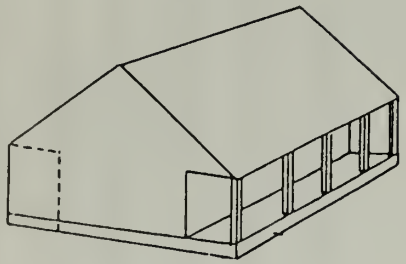


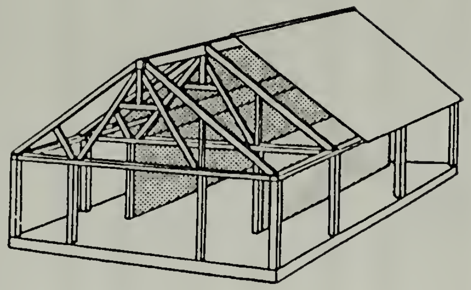
CLASS IIb

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (later form). Principal rafters (single or doubled) set on wall plate. Gallery rafters let into backs of principal rafters and supported on outer gallery plates.

FIG. 17 A

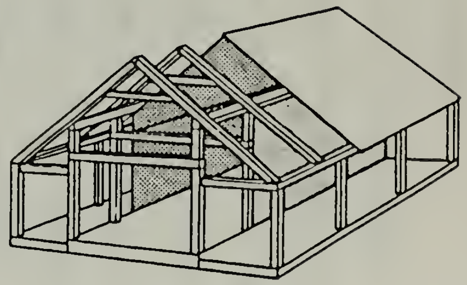
III





CLASS IIIa

Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof. Truss blades (principal rafters) mounted on wall plates. Long outer rafters mounted on outer gallery wall plates and let into or notched over the roof ridge. These rafters supported in their middles by posts (right side) or braces (left side), or by purlins supported by these.



CLASS IIIb

Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof (later form). Truss blades now absent. Outer rafters supported in their middles by posts or by post-supported purlins. Roof ridge generally not present

FIG. 17 B

Third Generation Acadian Houses

In the year 1763 the british military dispatched an engineer, Lt. Phillip Pittman, to secretly study the fortifications of New Orleans in preparation for an attack on that city. Besides making an accurate plan of the city in that year, including the locations of all of its fortifications, Lt. Pittman also drafted a wonderful perspective sketch, taken from across the river. All of the major houses which were located along the river were accurately portrayed (Fig. 18). This sketch provides a detailed view of the architectural character of the city at that time. It is a Creole city. Most of the houses are hip roofed and many have full-length galleries across the front. A few of the houses are of the Class II type, but most have single pitch hip roofs. While this was the first architectual scene that the Acadians saw when entering Louisiana, it apparently had little direct effect on their architectural preferences for some time. Their own houses more resembled the small cottage of southern Haiti and certain slave quarters of Louisiana plantations than they did of the Creole architecture of New Orleans. This does not mean that there were not powerful influences exerted on the Acadian builder by the dominant Creole aesthetic. That influence, however, would require some time to develop.

There was already a considerable variety of houses present in Louisiana at the time of the Acadian arrival. There were the huts of the slaves--generally poteaux en terre structures. They were one or two room cottages with gabled roofs. In addition there were the houses of the petites habitants, or small farmers who lived along the banks of the Mississippi River above New Orleans (Fig. 19). The nature of their houses has not been recorded, a most unfortunate omission in light of the fact

A VIEW OF NEW ORLEANS FROM ACROSS THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, 1765

Lieut. Phillip Pittman

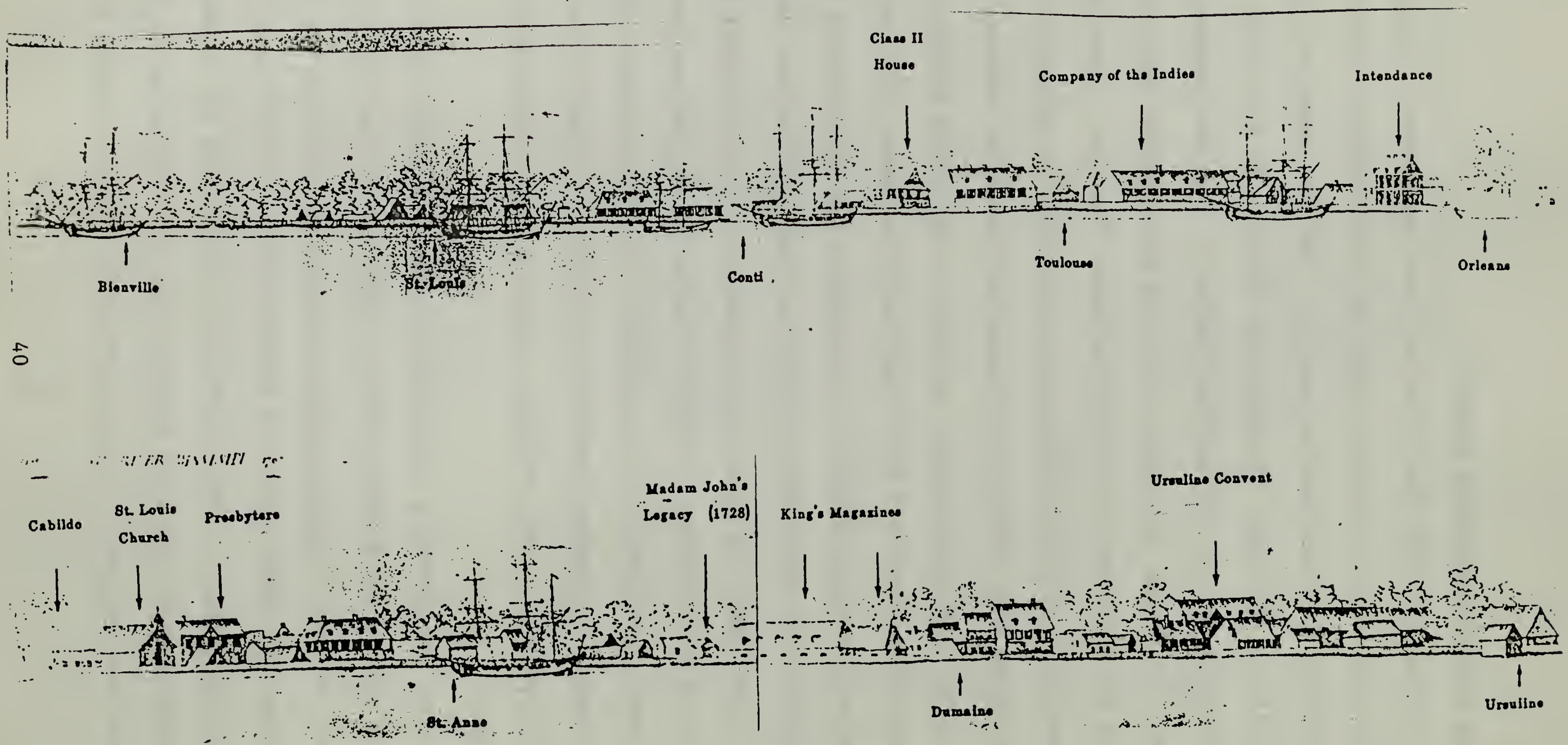

Class II House
Company of the Indies
Intendance
Bienville
St. Louis
Conti
Toulouse
Orleans
Cabildo
St. Louis Church
Presbytere
Madam John's Legacy (1728)
King's Magazines
Ursuline Convent
St. Anne
Dumaine
Ursuline

FIG. 18

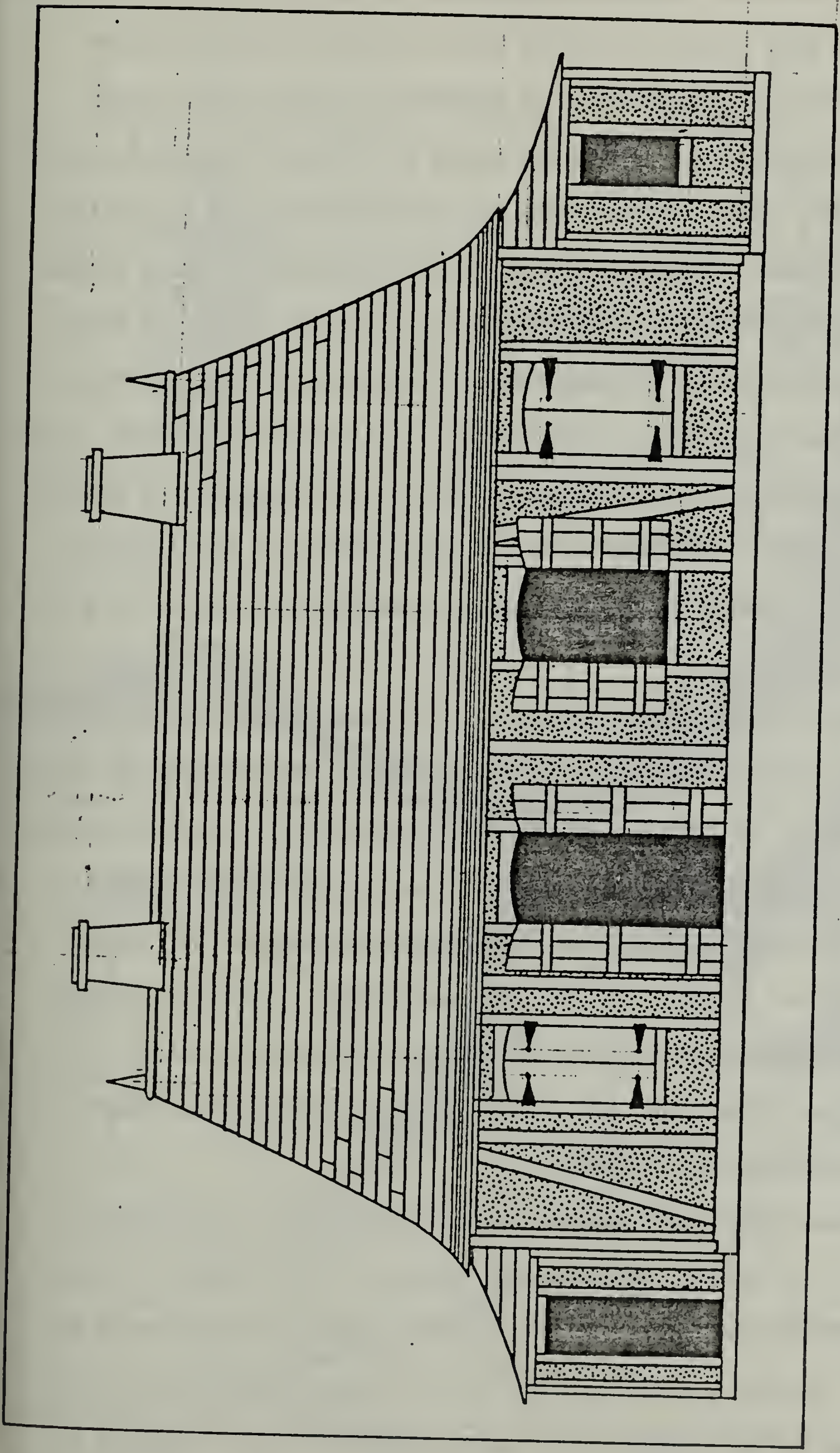
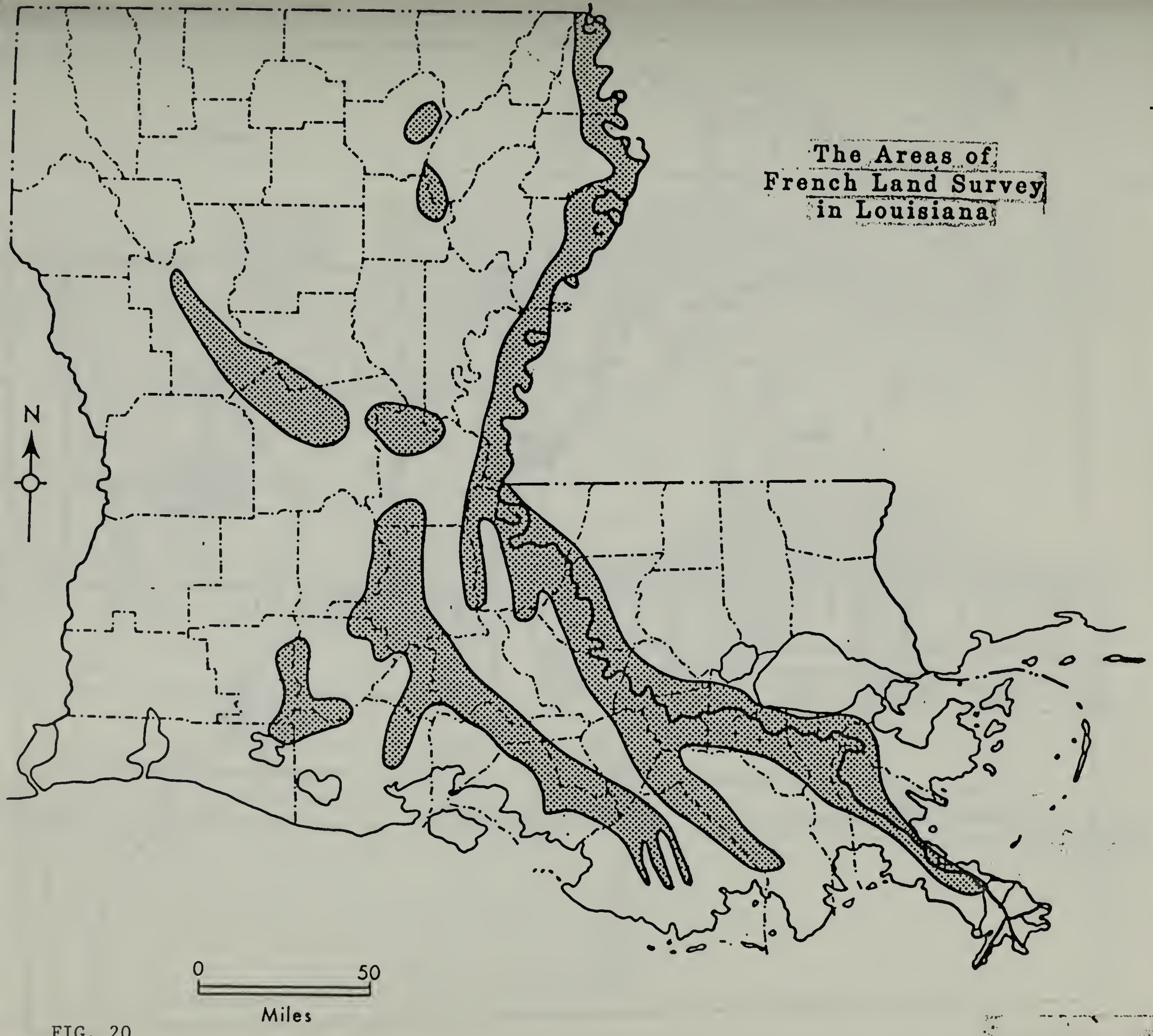


FIG. 19

that it may have been these very houses which provided the most direct model for the Acadians who settled just upstream, on the Acadian Coast.

The most popular form of plantation house in 1765 was the raised Class II Creole house(Fig. 17). One of these houses may be seen in the Pittman Drawing of New Orleans. Others are known to have existed in Pointe Coupee Parish, in Saint Martinville on the Teche, on the German Coast, in Baton Rouge and also in the Creole communities of Missouri and Illinois (Fig's. 20 & 21). The Acadians could not afford to emulate these structures in the early days of settlement, but by the last decade of the eighteenth century there is little doubt that elements of the architecture of these Creole houses were being integrated into the Acadian tradition (compare Fig's 20 & 20a).

The Mississippi Valley French Colonial, or Class II house appears to derive from the Spanish and French West Indies (Fig. 22)(see Edwards 1987). It was characterized by a broken pitch roof which covered a central module consisting of a salle-et-chambre module or a three-room module with the larger room in the middle (Fig. 24). The central module was surrounded with galleries on all sides (Fig. 23). In most Class II houses the side galleries would be eventually closed in to form bedrooms, resulting in a module four or five rooms long with a full-length front gallery (Fig's. 21 & 23A). Also important was the use of small cabinet rooms which were placed directly behind the end [gallery] bedrooms at the rear corners of the house (Fig. 21). This left an open loggia behind the central rooms. In the summer, cooling breezes could be easily funneled through the main portion of the house; double-leaf French doors were placed on both sides of the salle and usually the chambres as well. Class II houses were invariably raised above the ground, 18" or



The Areas of French Land Survey in Louisiana

FIG. 20

(after Taylor)

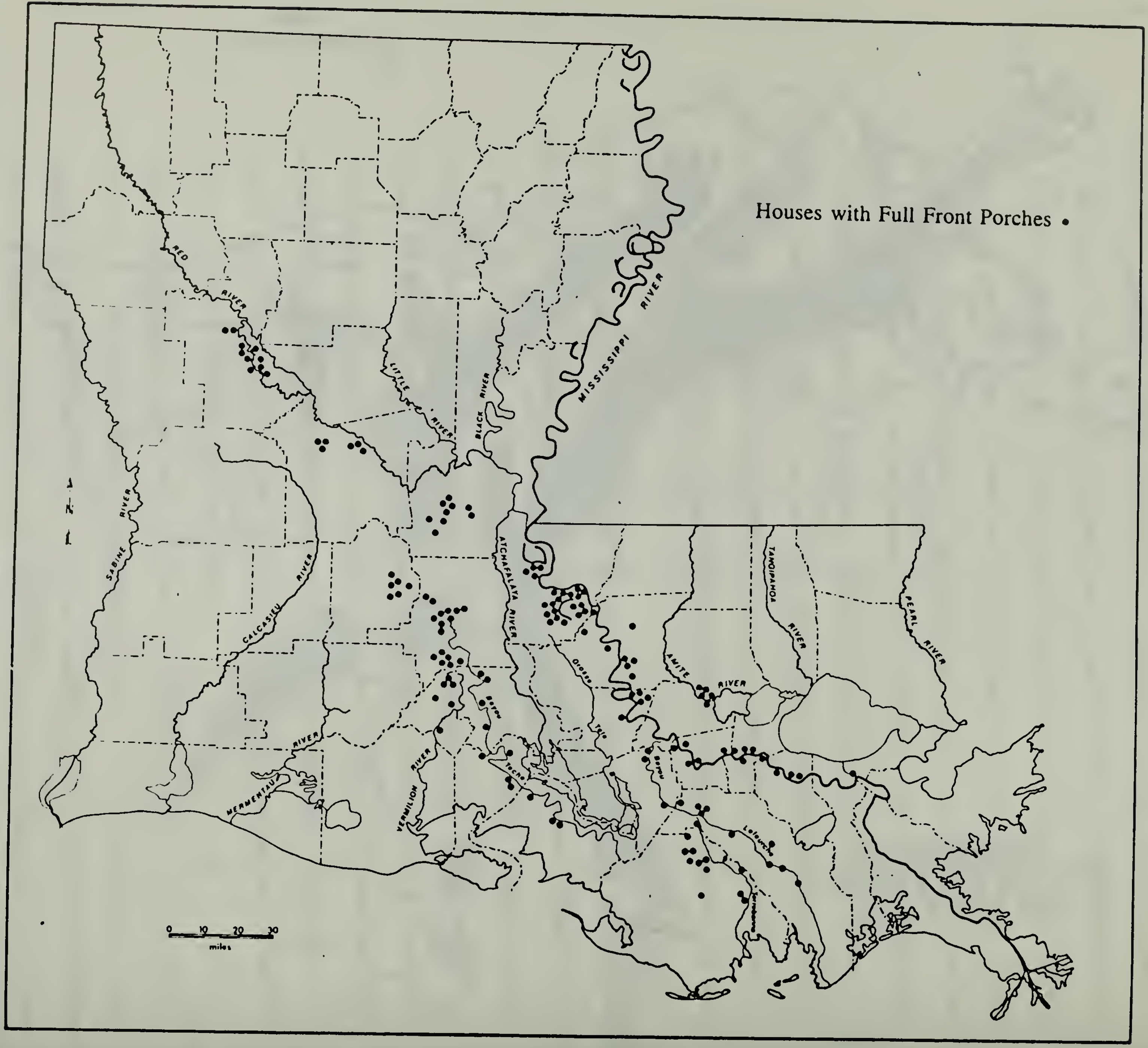
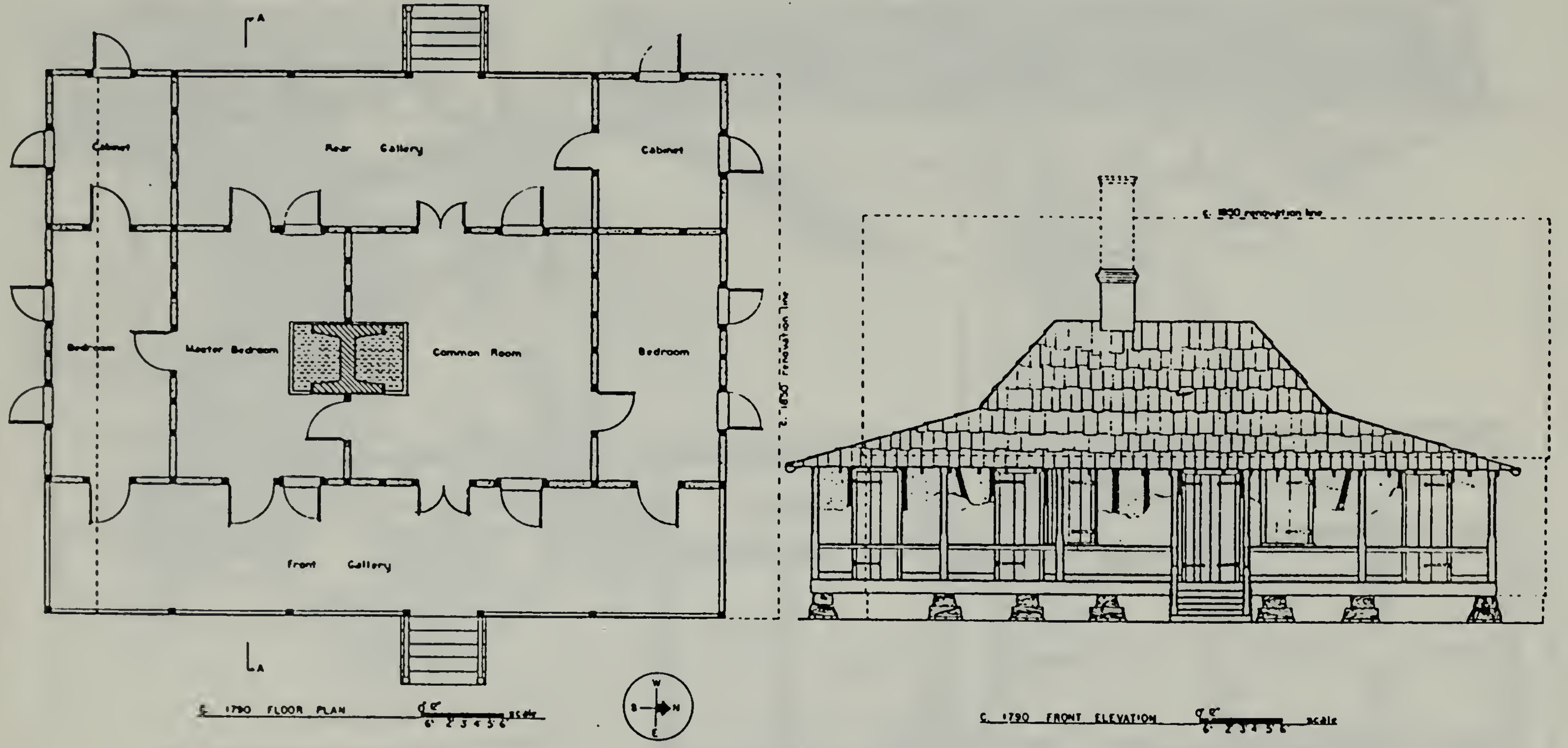

Houses with Full Front Porches ●
RED RIVER
LITTLE RIVER
BLACK RIVER
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
ATCHAFALAYA RIVER
SABINE RIVER
CALCASIEU RIVER
MERMENTAU RIVER
VERMILION RIVER
Bayou Teche
Grosse Tete
Bayou
AMITE RIVER
TANGIPAHOA RIVER
PEARL RIVER
Lafourche
Terrebonne
0 10 20 30
miles

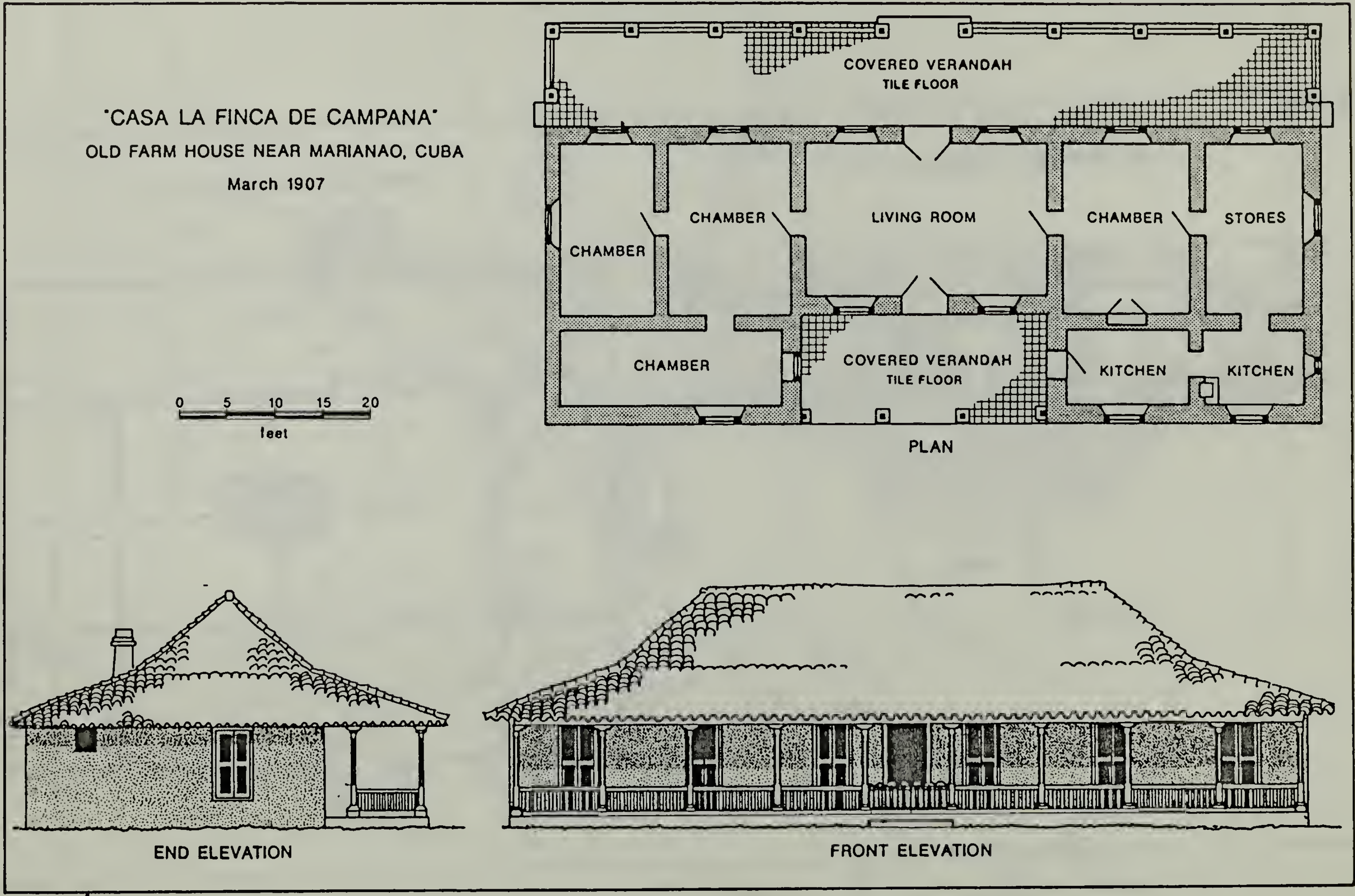
FIG. 20 A


A
Cabinet
Rear Gallery
Cabinet
Bedroom
Master Bedroom
Common Room
Bedroom
c. 1850 renovation line
Front Gallery
A
W
S
N
E
c. 1790 FLOOR PLAN
0 6' 2 3 4 5 6 scale
c. 1850 renovation line
c. 1790 FRONT ELEVATION
0 6' 2 3 4 5 6 scale

DesFOSSÉ HOUSE - C. 1790 RECONSTRUCTION

FIGURE 33

FIG. 21



'CASA LA FINCA DE CAMPANA'
OLD FARM HOUSE NEAR MARIANAO, CUBA
March 1907

0
5
10
15
20
feet
COVERED VERANDAH
TILE FLOOR
CHAMBER
CHAMBER
LIVING ROOM
CHAMBER
STORES
CHAMBER
COVERED VERANDAH
TILE FLOOR
KITCHEN
KITCHEN
PLAN
END ELEVATION
FRONT ELEVATION

FIG. 22

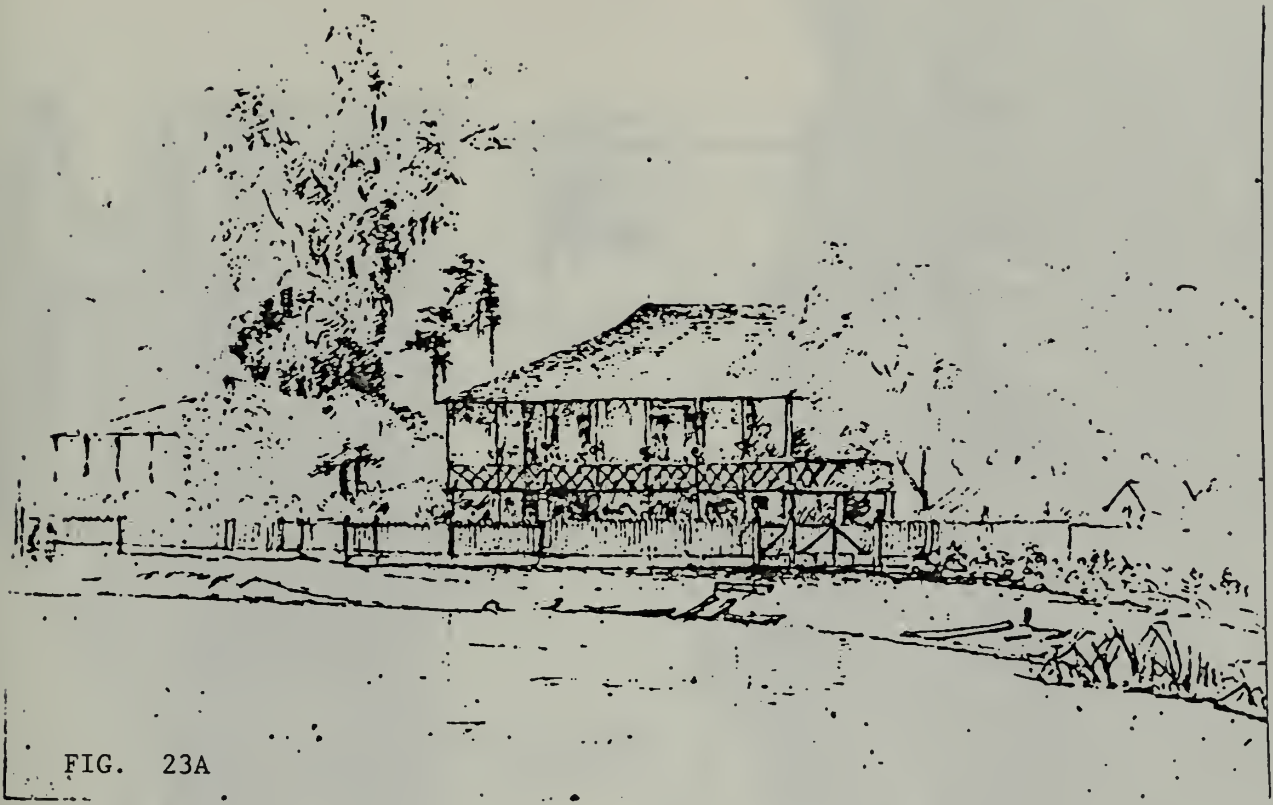


FIG. 23A

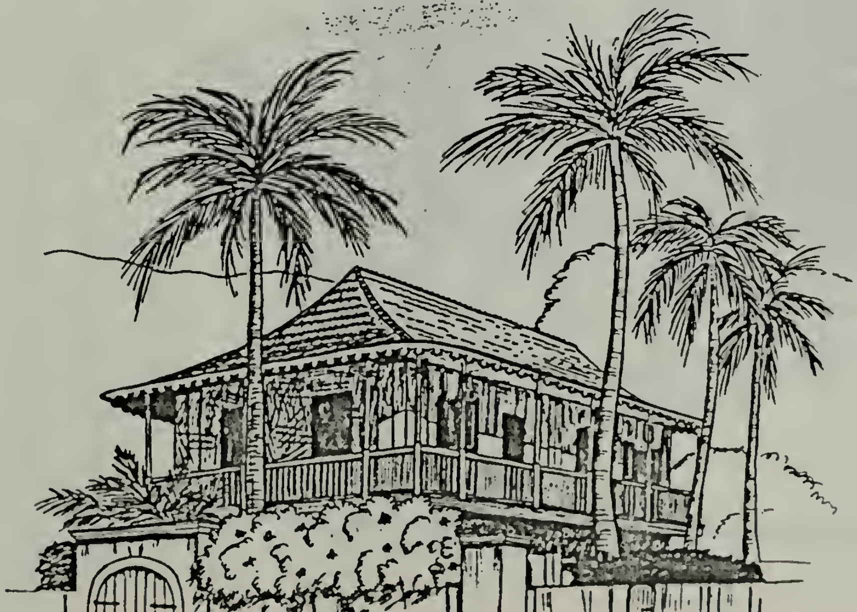
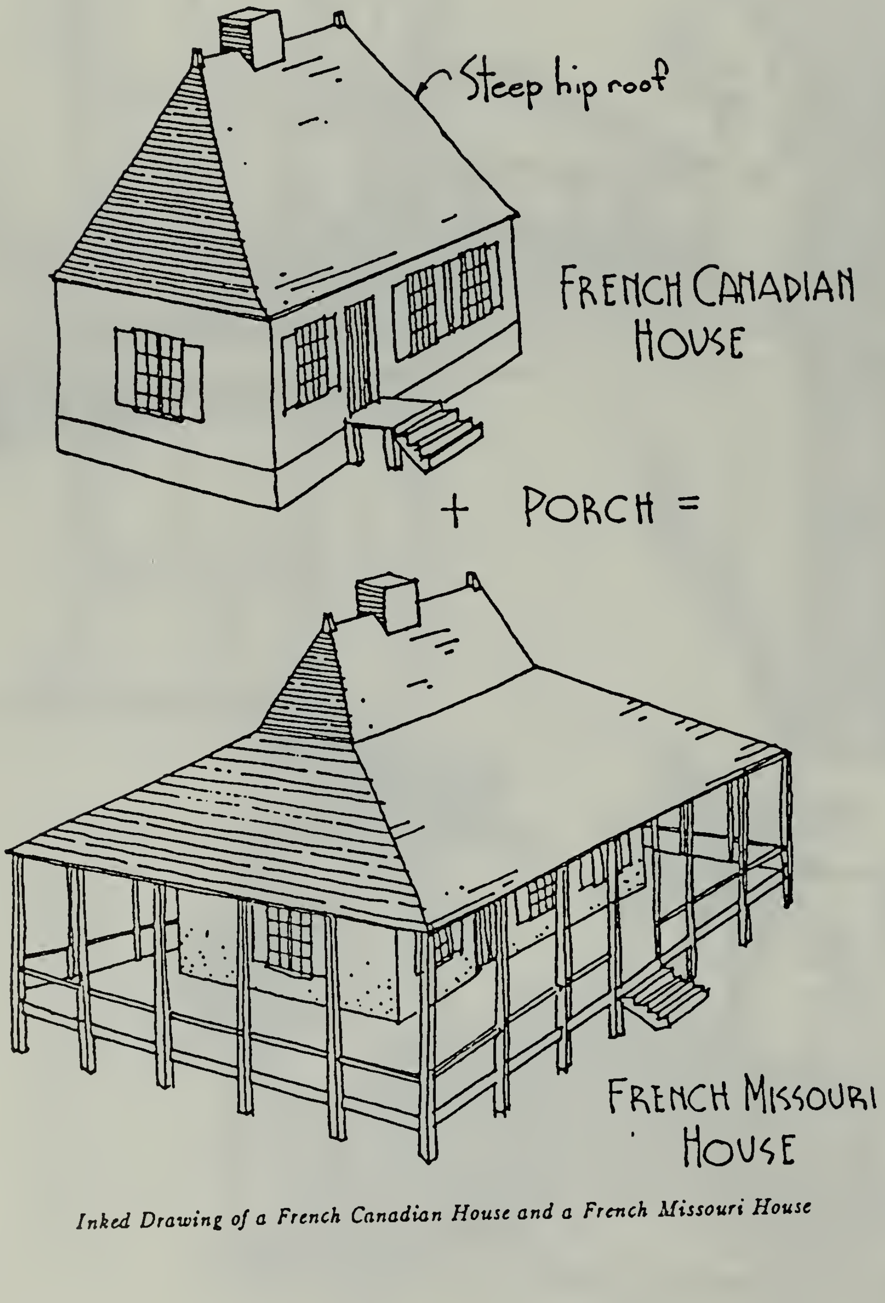


FIG. 23 B


Steep hip roof
FRENCH CANADIAN HOUSE
+ PORCH =
FRENCH MISSOURI HOUSE

Inked Drawing of a French Canadian House and a French Missouri House

FIG. 24

THE LACOUR HOUSE

An Early French Creole Dwelling

Constructed before 1740

Pointe Coupee Parish

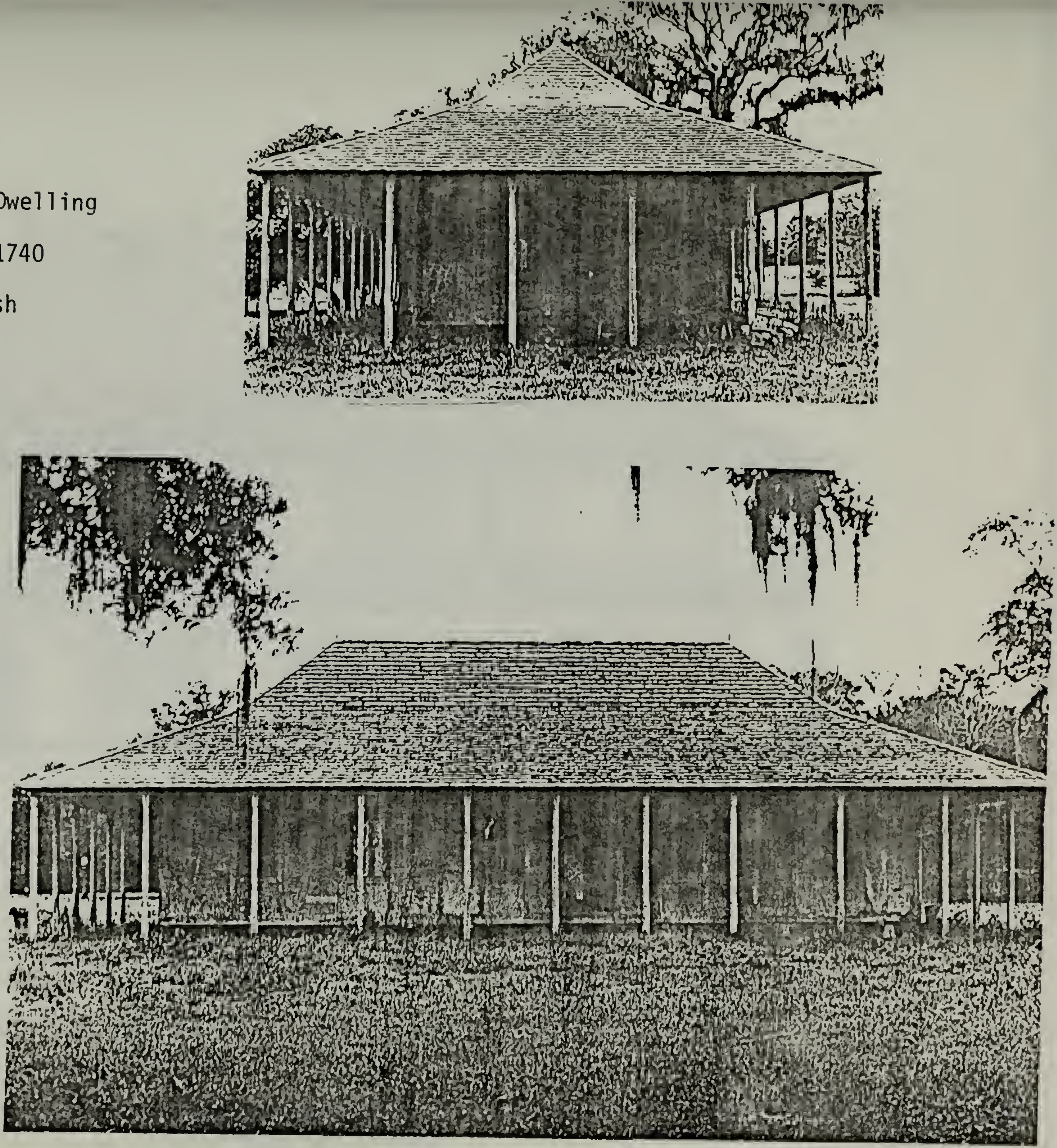
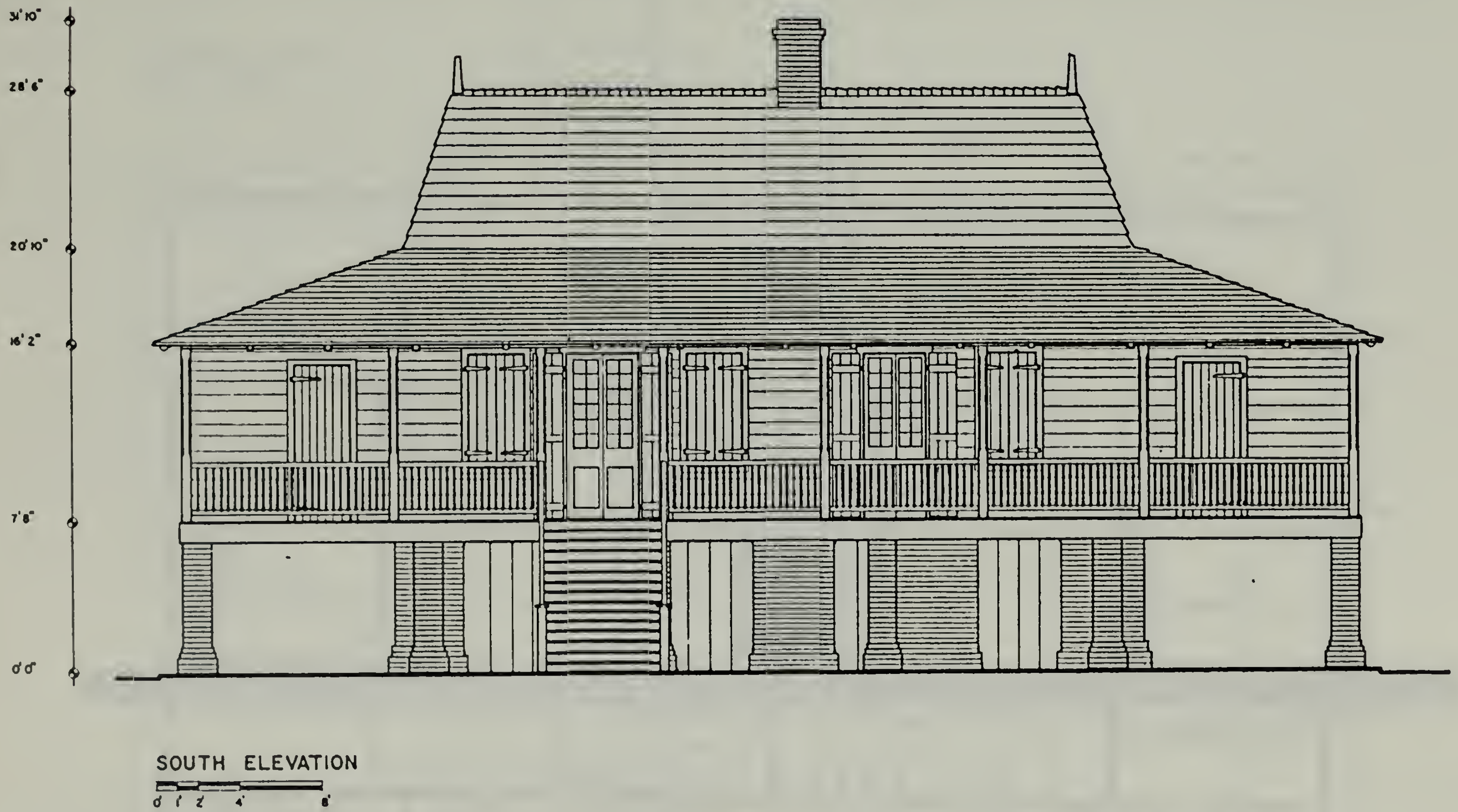


FIG. 25



SOUTH ELEVATION

FIG. 26 A

DRAWN BY: GUY W. CARWILE

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE

THE HOLDEN HOUSE
ROUGON, LOUISIANA

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 4 OF 10 SHEETS

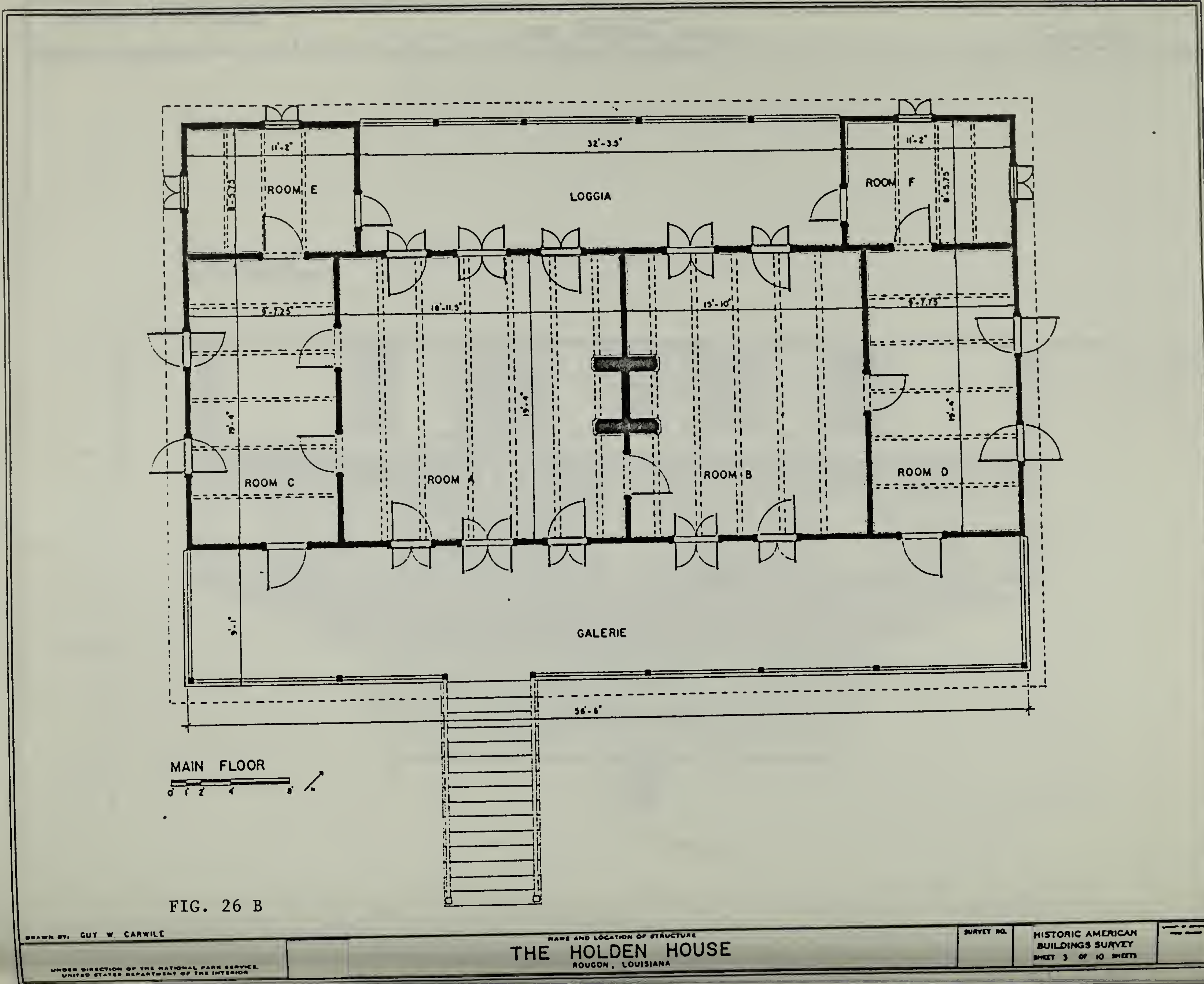
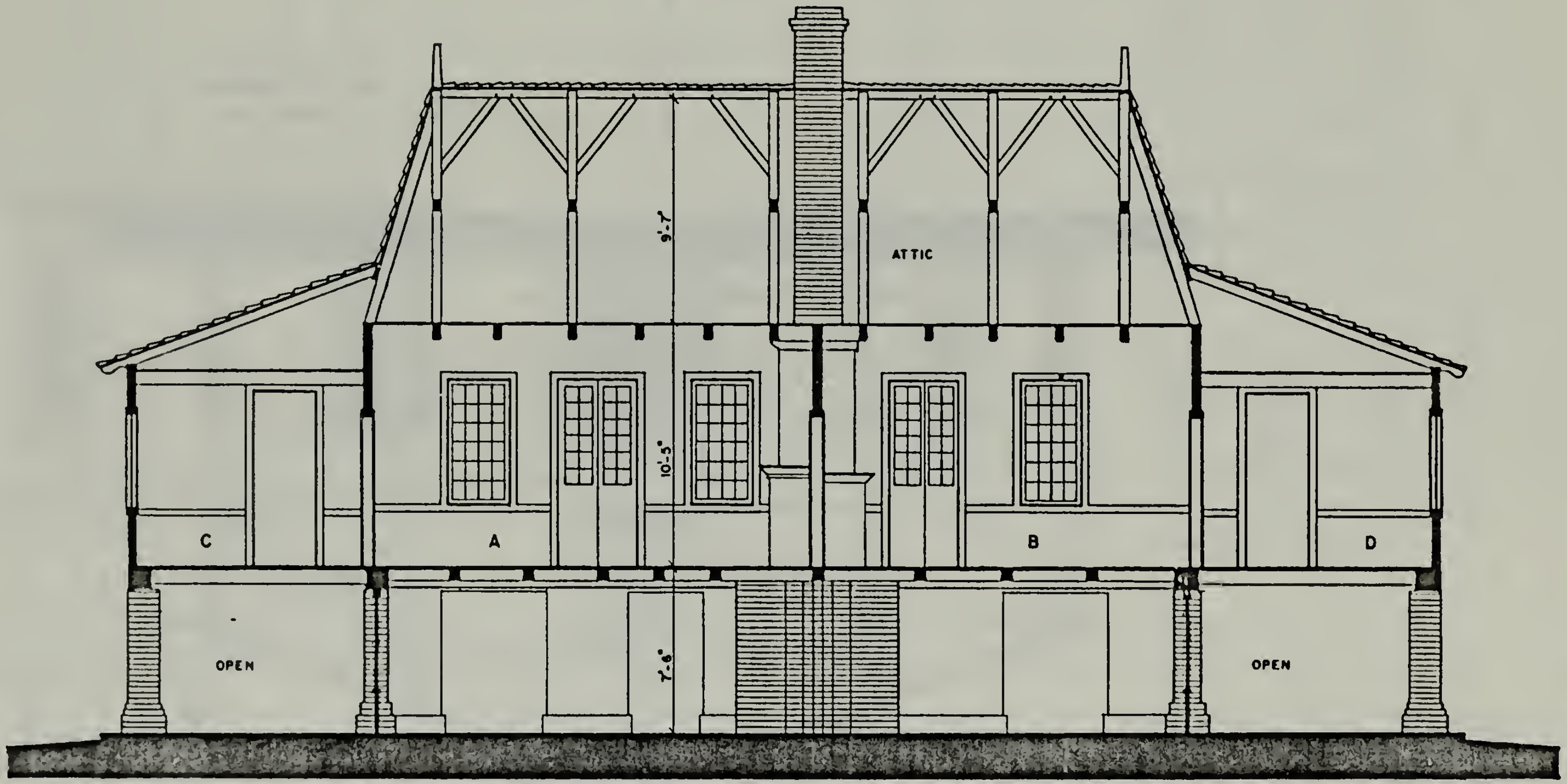

ROOM E
ROOM F
LOGGIA
ROOM A
ROOM B
ROOM C
ROOM D
GALERIE
11'-2"
11'-2"
32'-3.5"
8'-5.75"
8'-5.75"
5'-7.25"
5'-7.75"
18'-11.5"
15'-10"
19'-4"
19'-4"
19'-4"
9'-1"
36'-6"
MAIN FLOOR
0 1 2 4 8
N
DRAWN BY: GUY W. CARWILE
NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE
THE HOLDEN HOUSE
ROUGON, LOUISIANA
UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
SURVEY NO.
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 3 OF 10 SHEETS

FIG. 26 B


ATTIC
9'-7"
10'-5"
7'-8"
C
A
B
D
OPEN
OPEN

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

0 1 2 4 8

FIG. 26 C

DRAWN BY: GUY W. CARWILE

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE

THE HOLDEN HOUSE
ROUGON, LOUISIANA

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 8 OF 10 SHEETS

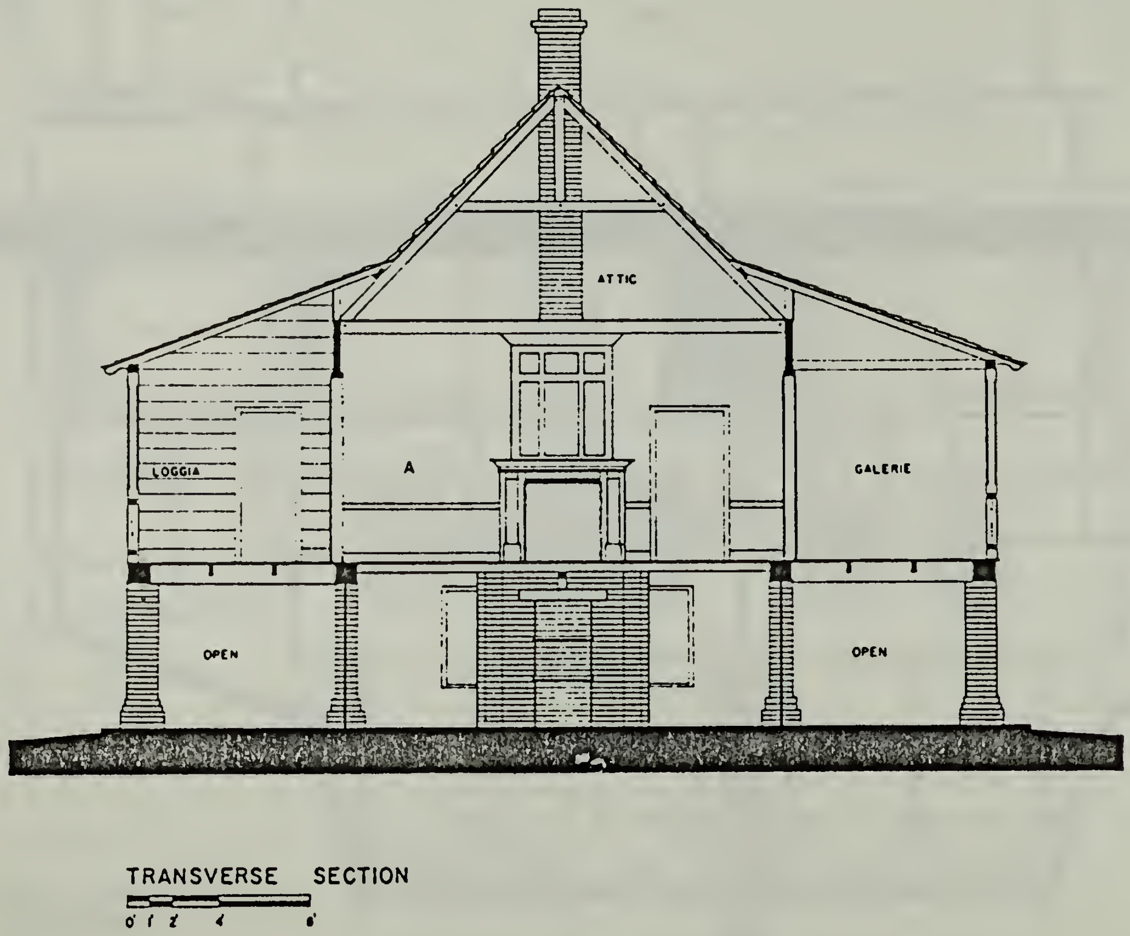

ATTIC
LOGGIA
A
GALERIE
OPEN
OPEN
TRANSVERSE SECTION
0' 1' 2' 4' 8'

FIG. 26 D

DRAWN BY: GUY W. CARWILE
UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE
THE HOLDEN HOUSE
ROUGON, LOUISIANA
SURVEY NO.
HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 9 OF 10 SHEETS

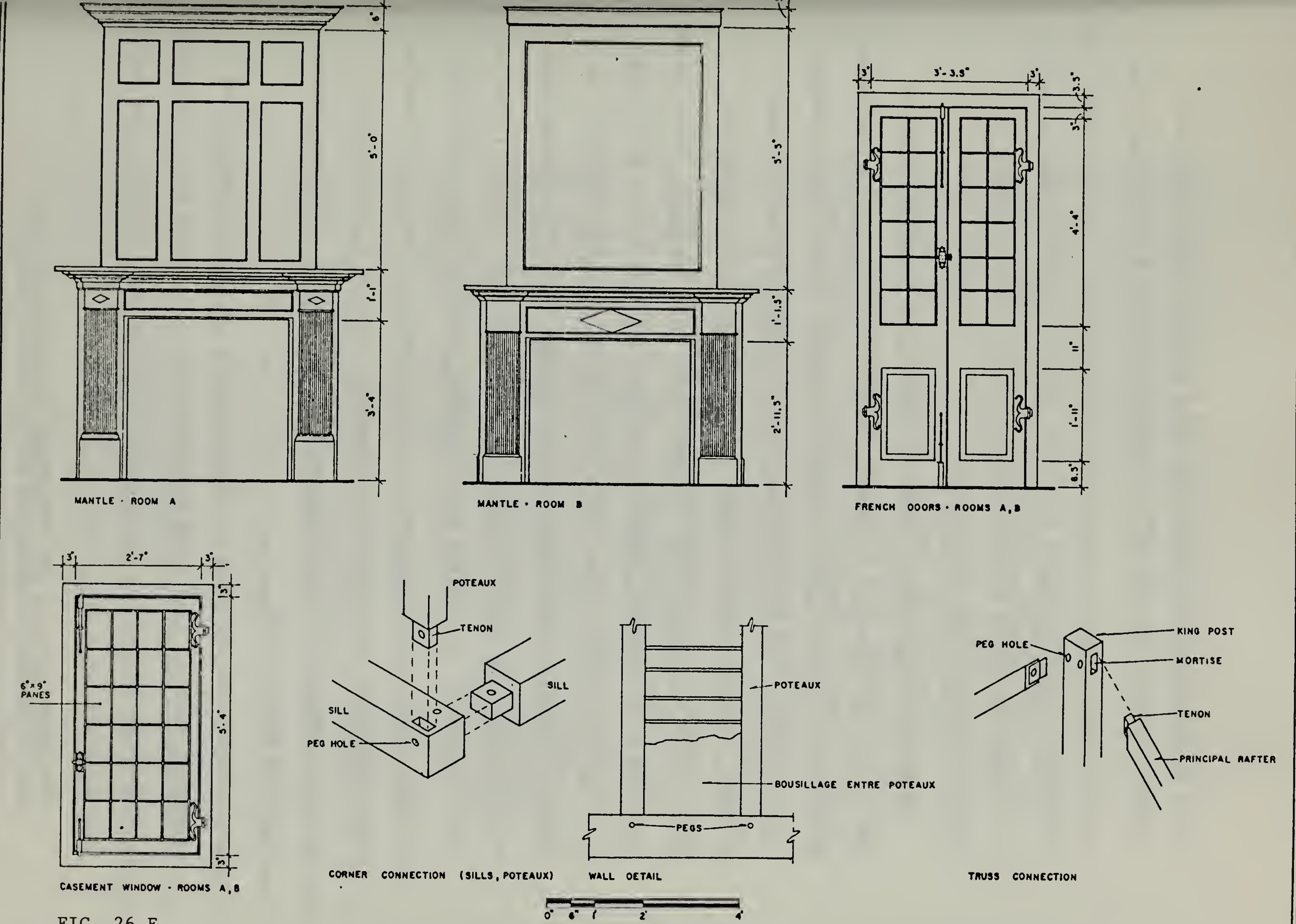

6"
5'-0"
1'-1"
3'-4"
MANTLE · ROOM A
5'-5"
1'-1.5"
2'-11.5"
MANTLE · ROOM B
3'
3'-3.5"
3'
3.5"
3"
4'-4"
11"
1'-11"
6.5"
FRENCH DOORS · ROOMS A, B
3'
2'-7"
3'
3'
6"x9" PANES
5'-4"
3'
CASEMENT WINDOW · ROOMS A, B
POTEAUX
TENON
SILL
SILL
PEG HOLE
CORNER CONNECTION (SILLS, POTEAUX)
POTEAUX
BOUSILLAGE ENTRE POTEAUX
PEGS
WALL DETAIL
PEG HOLE
KING POST
MORTISE
TENON
PRINCIPAL RAFTER
TRUSS CONNECTION
0" 6" 1' 2' 4'

FIG. 26 E

DRAWN BY: GUY W. CARWILE

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE

THE HOLDEN HOUSE

ROUGON, LOUISIANA

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 10 OF 10 SHEETS

higher on large cypress blocks. Many were raised a full story. The basement was used for storage, for summer kitchen and dining room or as a slave quarters. Class II Creole houses were generally very much alike. The standardization was probably the result of imitation which was deliberate and widespread: "Build a house like that of Mr. Pierre Germain" (1744 Builder's Contract (LHQ 13(1): 140)).

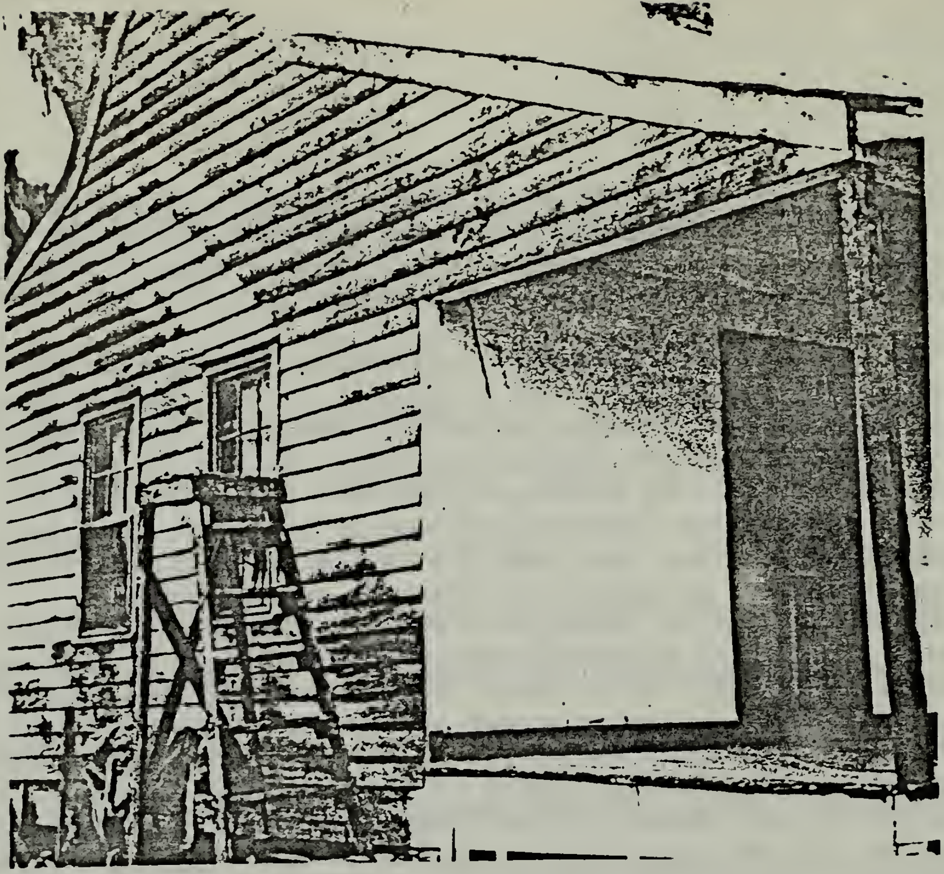
The plan of the Class II raised plantation house appears to be the result of a syncretism of a Spanish colonial Creole farm house (ultimately derived from the Diego Colon's large governmental house in Santo Domingo, built Ca 1510) and a French peasant salle-et-chambre house from Saint Domingue. Cabinet rooms were basic to the Spanish Creole provincial house. They are derived from the Spanish colonial gabinetes, which formed the sides of an in-antis loggia on the front and rear of the early high style Spanish Colonial house. This house was in turn influenced by the design of the early Renaissance Italian country villa. The Spanish plan was adopted by the French colonists in Northern Saint Domingue in the late 1600s, whence it was carried into Louisiana, probably before 1725 (Fig's. 22 &25). Since this house was far better adapted to Louisiana's tropical environment than the houses of the Canadian coureurs de bois or the buildings designed by French engineers in New Orleans, it became popular along the banks of the lower Mississippi and along the Gulf Coast in the third decade of the eighteenth century. Many Class II houses were still to be seen when Claude C. Robin travelled up the Mississippi River from New Orleans in the years 1803-05:(Fig's. 26 & 27)

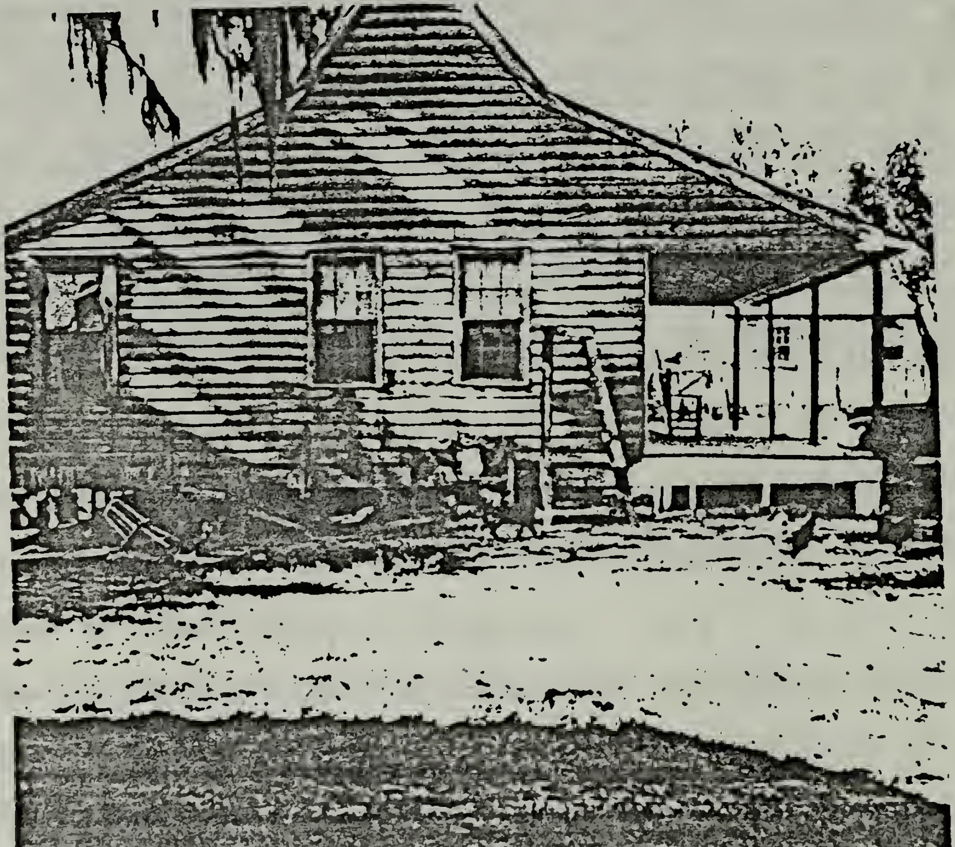
> [The houses] are of the most varied form, some built of
> wood, surrounded by galleries in the Chinese fashion

> [referring to Class II French Creole houses with double-pitch roofs], others built of brick are surmounted with a gallery in the Italian manner [referring to Class III houses with Tuscan columns supporting their galleries...
>
> From the city [New Orleans] to Lafourche [Donaldsonville], both banks of the river are lined with houses. From Lafourche to Point Coupee the interval between houses becomes larger. Beyond Point Coupee there are no houses outside of the few settlements at long distances from each other. The houses close to the city (especially those of the sugar planters) are sumptuous. Further away they are smaller and simpler. Some of the houses are of brick with columns, but the usual construction is of timber with the interstices filled with earth, the whole plastered over with lime. These houses have oridinarily only two or three large rooms, but the heat of the climate makes galleries around the houses a necessity. All of them have one, some around all four sides of the house, others on two sides only, and rarely on only one side. These galleries are formed by a prolongation of the roof beyond the walls, but the prolongation forms a break in the angle of the plane of the roof so that the gallery roof rises instead of falling. This produces an effect opposite to the appearance of the Mansard roof. These attached wing-like roofs are supported by little wooden columns, an agreeable effect for the eyes. The galleries are usually eight or nine feet wide. These wide galleries have several advantages. First, they prevent the sun's rays from striking the walls of the house and thus to keep them cool. Also, they form a convenient and pleasant spot upon which to promenade during the day (one of course, goes to the side away from the sun), one can eat or entertain there, and very often during the hot summer nights one sleeps there. In many houses the ends of the galleries are closed to form two additional rooms (Robin 1966: 122).

Popular in the city, but not yet common in the countryside, was another kind of house--the Class III. This form was characterized by a single-pitch umbrella roof which covered both the central rooms and the gallery (Fig's. 28 & 29). Although many smaller Class III houses were already in existance at the time of the Acadian arrival, it was only recently that raised houses were being built in New Orleans and in the countryside. In almost all cases the Class III house had a full-length gallery across the front or around the central unit.

It would be surprising, indeed, if the dominant Creole





TYPICAL EARLY CREOLE ARCHITECTURE FROM THE NORTHERN PRAIRIES. THESE FORMS WERE ADOPTED BY MANY CAJUNS

FIG. 27

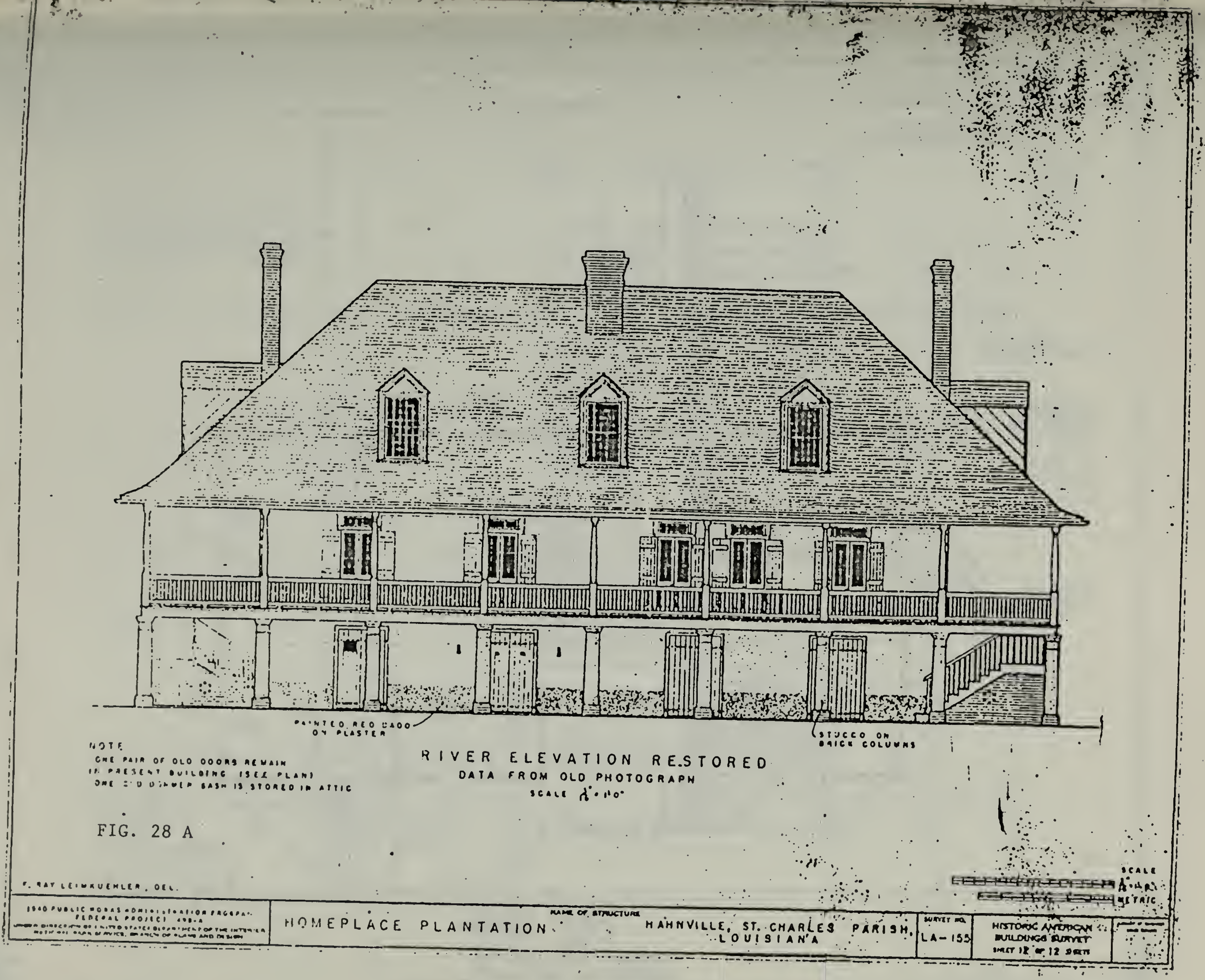

PAINTED RED DADO
ON PLASTER
STUCCO ON
BRICK COLUMNS
NOTE
ONE PAIR OF OLD DOORS REMAIN
IN PRESENT BUILDING (SEE PLAN)
ONE OLD DORMER SASH IS STORED IN ATTIC
RIVER ELEVATION RESTORED
DATA FROM OLD PHOTOGRAPH
SCALE 1/8" = 1'0"
F. RAY LEIMKUEHLER, DEL.
1940 PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
FEDERAL PROJECT 498-A
UNDER DIRECTION OF UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN
NAME OF STRUCTURE
HOMEPLACE PLANTATION
HAHNVILLE, ST. CHARLES PARISH, LOUISIANA
SURVEY NO.
LA-155
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 12 OF 12 SHEETS
SCALE
METRIC

FIG. 28 A

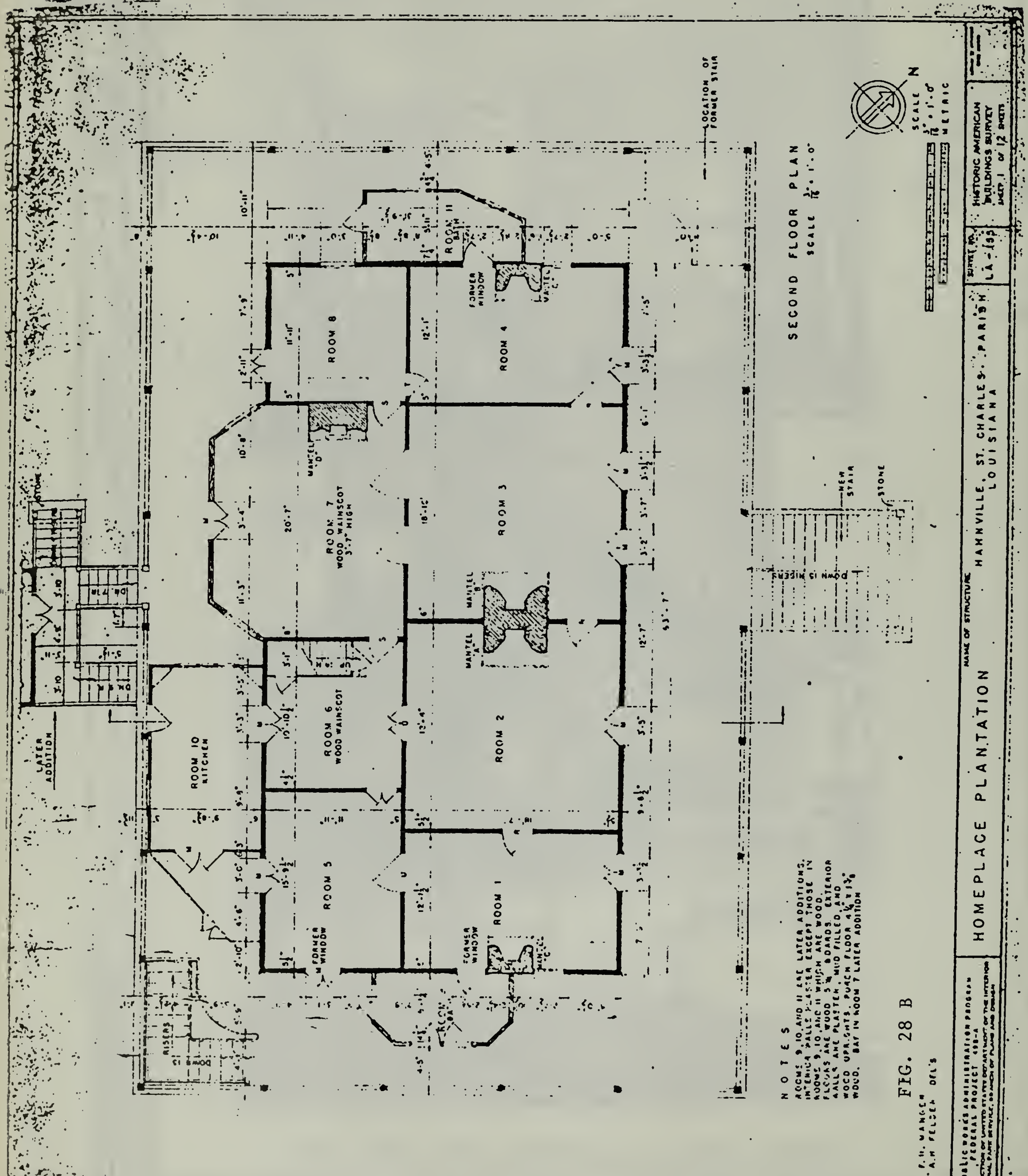

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"
ROOM 1
ROOM 2
ROOM 3
ROOM 4
ROOM 5
ROOM 6 WOOD WAINSCOT
ROOM 7 WOOD WAINSCOT 3'-7" HIGH
ROOM 8
ROOM 10 KITCHEN
ROOM 11 BATH
MANTEL A
MANTEL B
MANTEL C
MANTEL D
FORMER WINDOW
LATER ADDITION
LOCATION OF FORMER STAIR
NEW STAIR
STONE
DOWN 13 RISERS
N
SCALE
METRIC
NOTES
ROOMS 9, 10, AND 11 ARE LATER ADDITIONS.
INTERIOR WALLS PLASTER EXCEPT THOSE IN
ROOMS 9, 10, AND 11 WHICH ARE WOOD.
FLOORS ARE WOOD 5" BOARDS. EXTERIOR
WALLS ARE PLASTER, MUD FILLED, AND
WOOD UPRIGHTS. PORCH FLOOR 4 1/2" x 1 1/2"
WOOD. BAY IN ROOM 7 LATER ADDITION
F. H. WANGER
A. H. FELDER DEL'S
1936 PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM FEDERAL PROJECT
NAME OF STRUCTURE
HOMEPLACE PLANTATION
HAHNVILLE, ST. CHARLES PARISH LOUISIANA
SURVEY NO. LA-193
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY SHEET 1 OF 12 SHEETS

FIG. 28 B

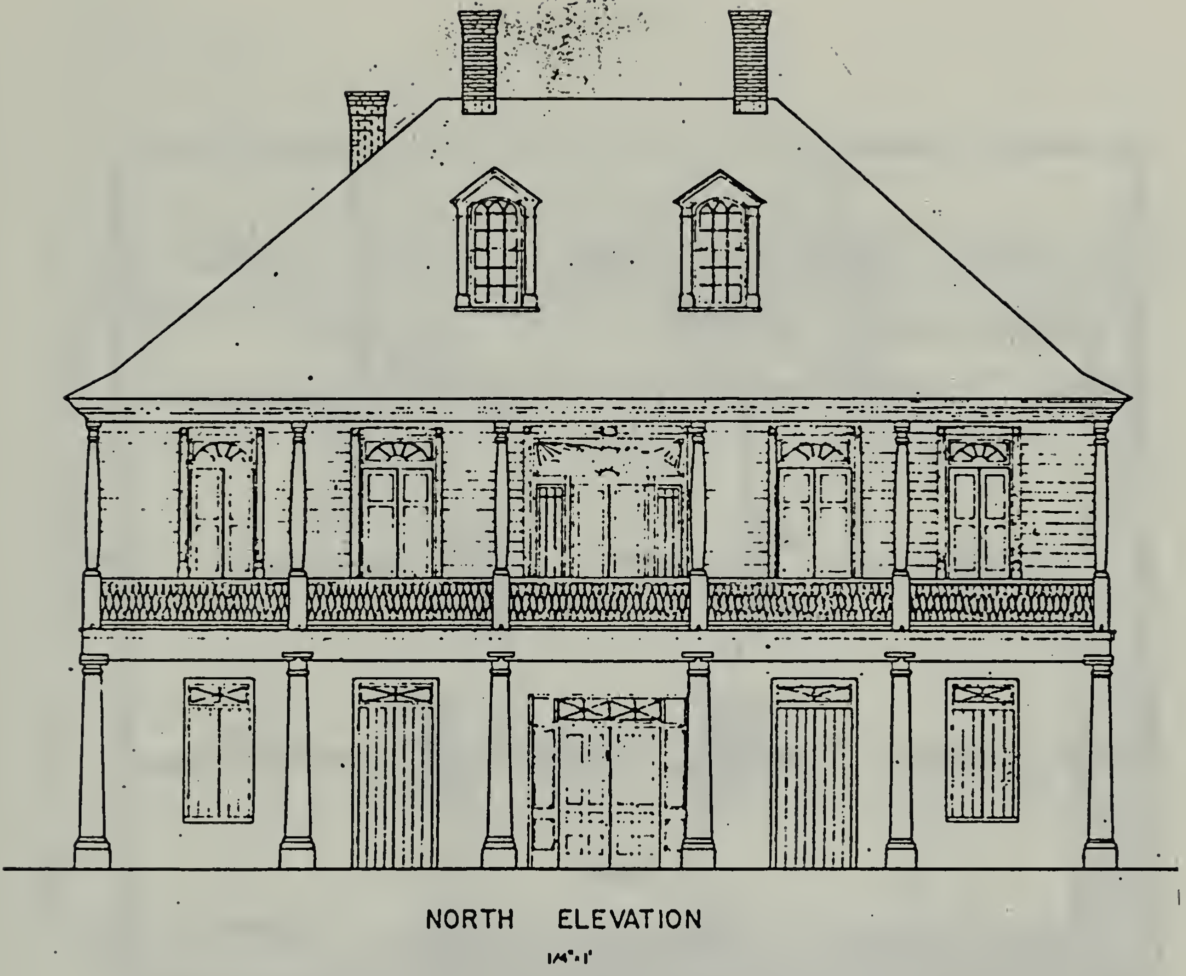
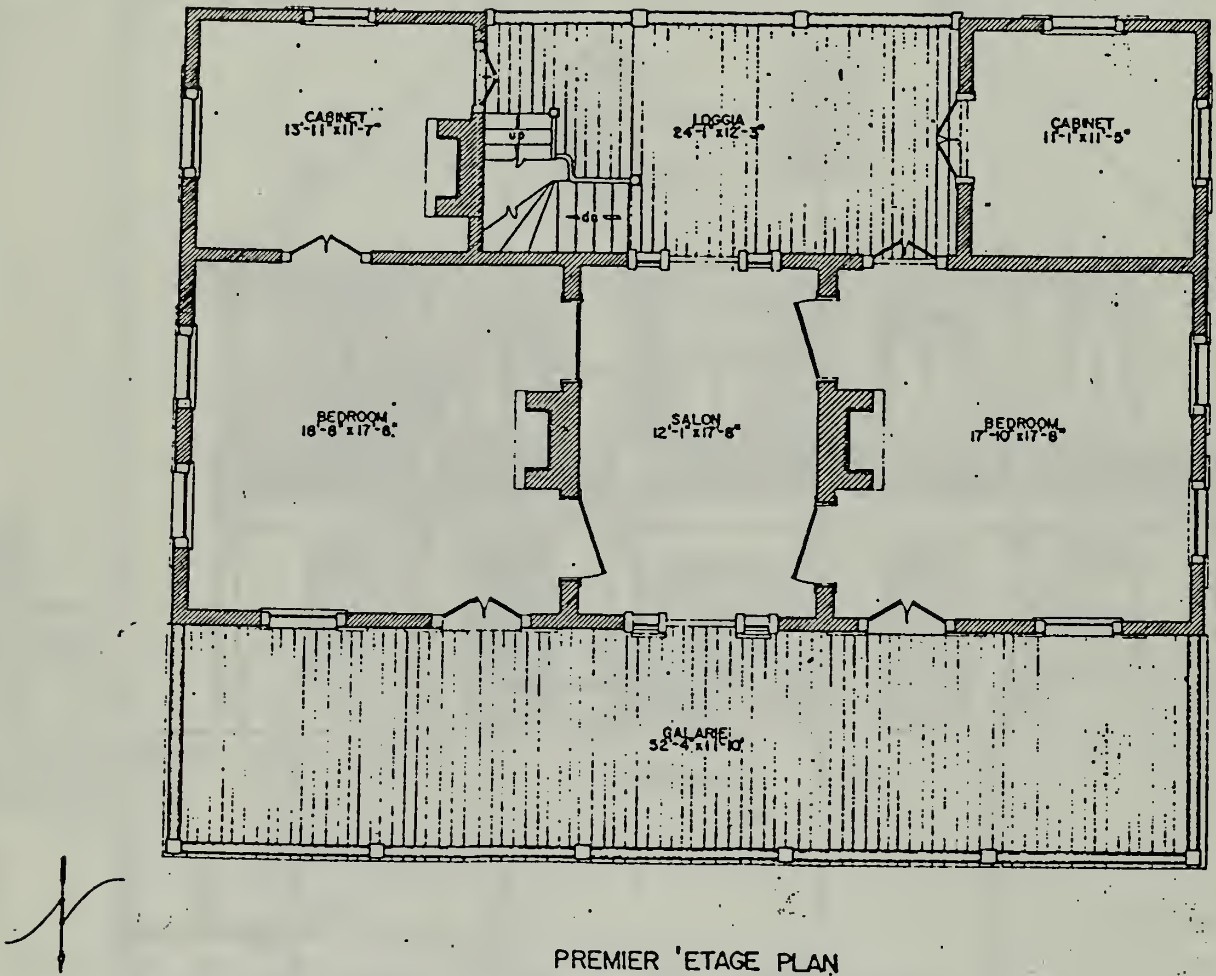

NORTH ELEVATION
1/4"=1'

FIG. 29 A

0' 5' 10'

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE
LABATUT HOUSE
POINTE COUPEE PARISH LOUISIANA
SURVEY NO.
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET OF SHEETS


CABINET
13'-11"x11'-7"
up
dn
LOGGIA
24'-1"x12'-5"
CABINET
11'-1"x11'-5"
BEDROOM
18'-8"x17'-8"
SALON
12'-1"x17'-8"
BEDROOM
17'-10"x17'-8"
GALARIE
32'-4"x11'-10"

PREMIER 'ETAGE PLAN

1/4"=1'

0' 5' 10'

FIG. 29 B

TOM HEDGEPETH

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE
LABATUT HOUSE
POINTE COUPEE PARISH LOUISIANA

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET OF SHEETS

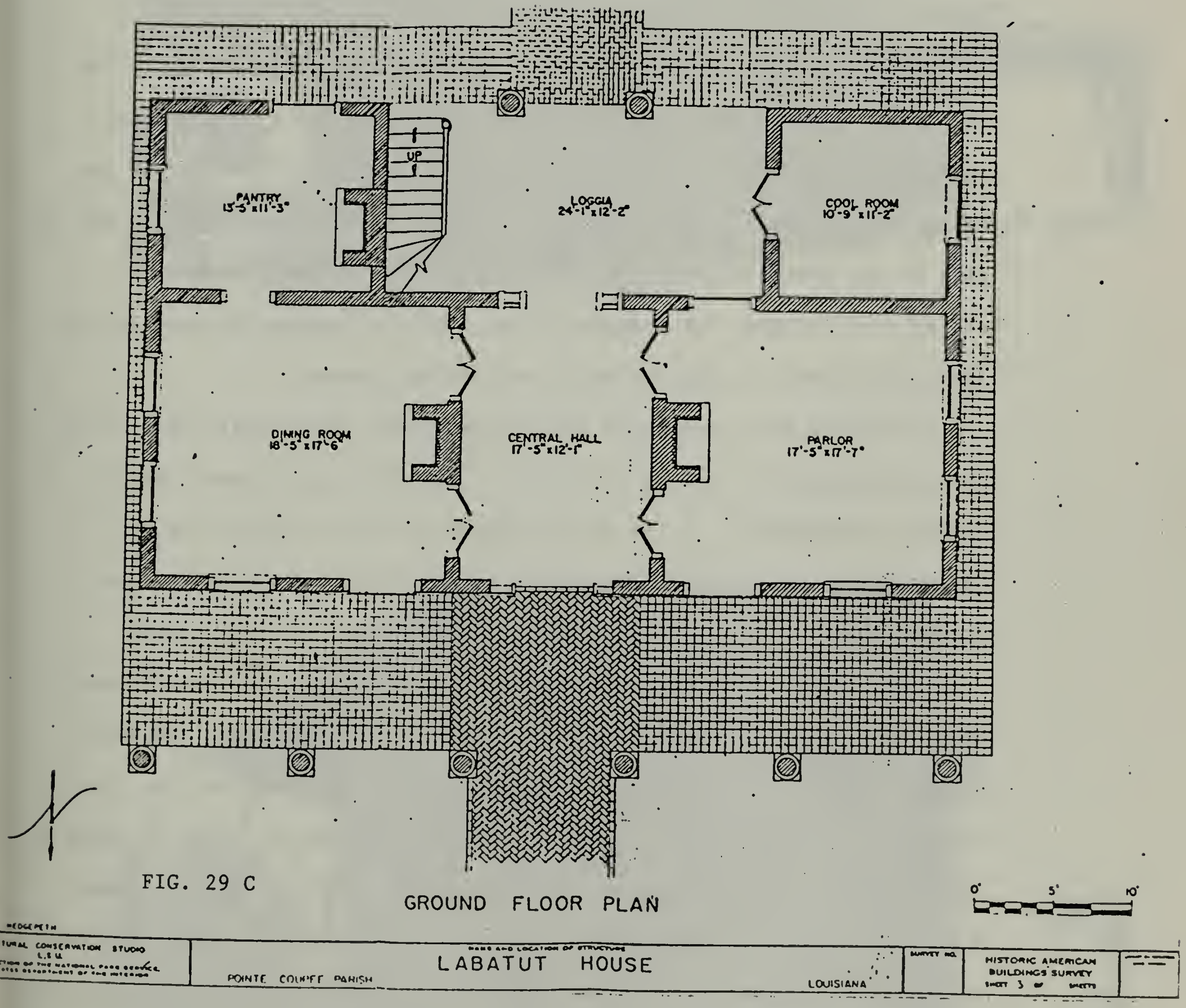
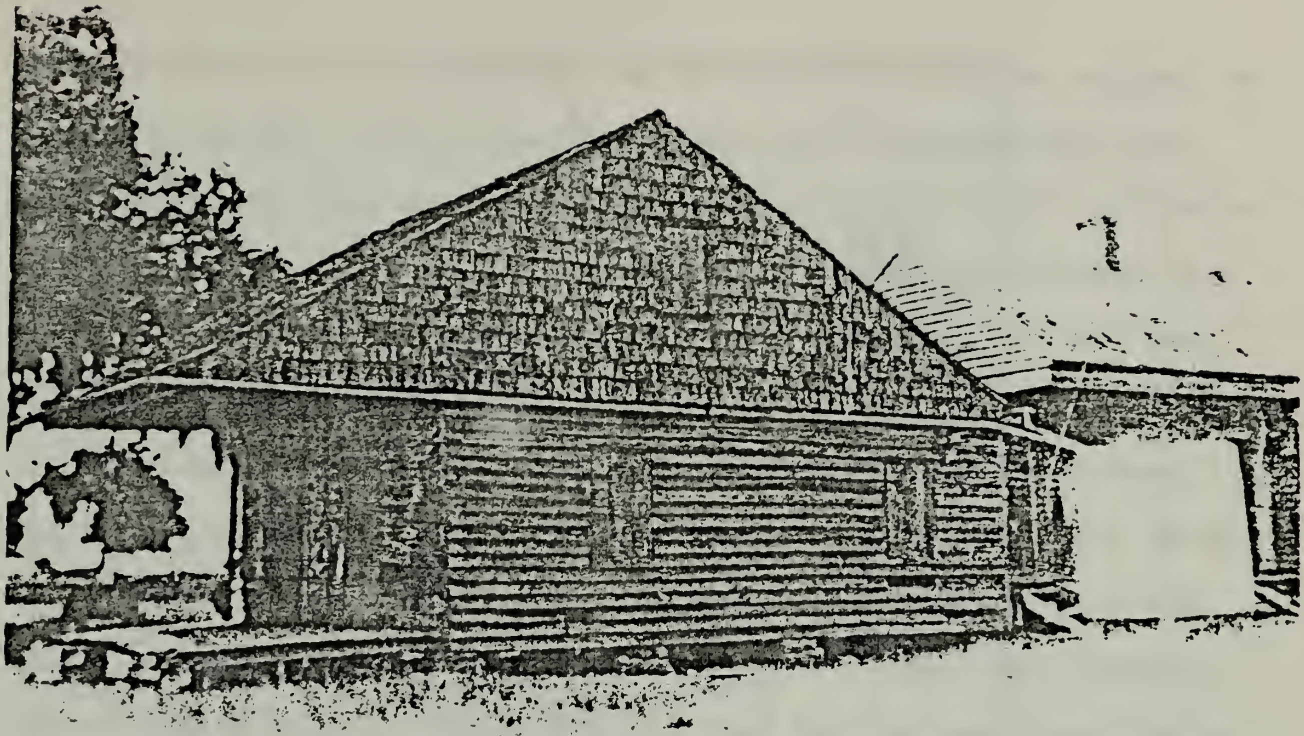
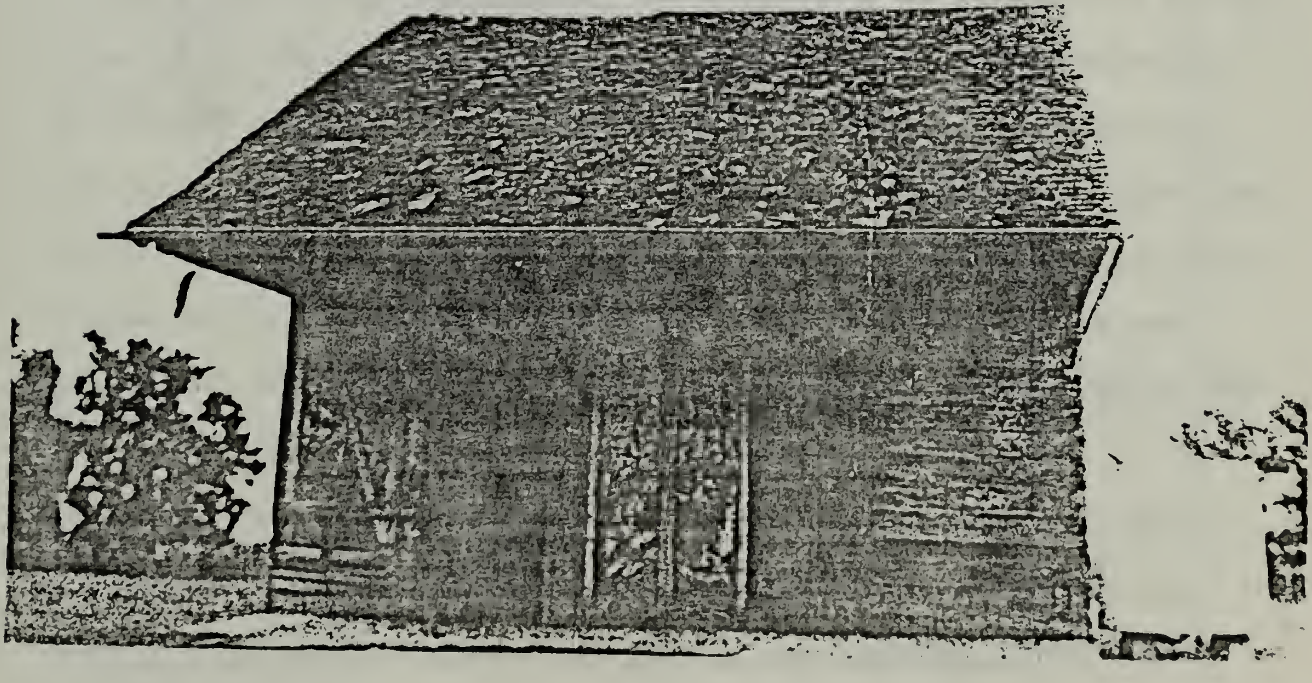

UP
PANTRY
13'-5" x 11'-3"
LOGGIA
24'-1" x 12'-2"
COOL ROOM
10'-9" x 11'-2"
DINING ROOM
18'-5" x 17'-6"
CENTRAL HALL
17'-5" x 12'-1"
PARLOR
17'-5" x 17'-7"
0'
5'
10'
GROUND FLOOR PLAN
N HEDGEPETH
ECTURAL CONSERVATION STUDIO
L.S.U.
ECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE
LABATUT HOUSE
POINTE COUPEE PARISH
LOUISIANA
SURVEY NO.
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 3 OF SHEETS

FIG. 29 C

architectural pattern had not influenced the growing Acadian tradition, but it appears to have done so in a surprisingly conservative fashion. The Acadians did not simply give up their beloved house to replace it with the Creole form. Rather, it is clear that they borrowed selectively from the Creole tradition. The borrowing was probably of a limited nature at first. The Third Generation Acadian house is marked by the use of a single-pitch umbrella roof which covers a full-length front gallery. The roof of the house in invariably gabled rather than hipped. A hipped roof was by now the mark of the pretentious Creole. The Acadian retained his ancient gabled-roof cottage, but modified it to suit the tropical climate and the economic and social necessities of the new environment.

One way in which the third Generation Acadian house differed from the Creole house was in the use of the loft. All vernacular houses must be capable of expansion. In the Creole house, expansion occurred on the gallery spaces. The side galleries of the house were enclosed to make additional rooms. In the Acadian house, however, there were no side galleries. The Acadians expanded upward instead. This was probably simply a carry-over of their traditional use of loft space for storage and extra sleeping area. The principal difficulty with this approach for the Creole was that his loft was not very large. This is because the truss blades and rafters of the attic descended steeply to the tops of the walls of the principal room. Little head-room remained in the loft due to its narrowess. The Acadians, however, soon adopted the Class III roof (Fig. 30). Being of about the same height, it was far wider due to the fact that the rafters extended all the way out to the front of the gallery. Thus, the loft





TYPICAL ACADIAN COTTAGES ON THE PRAIRIES, 1950s
(From Kniffen's Survey)

FIG. 30

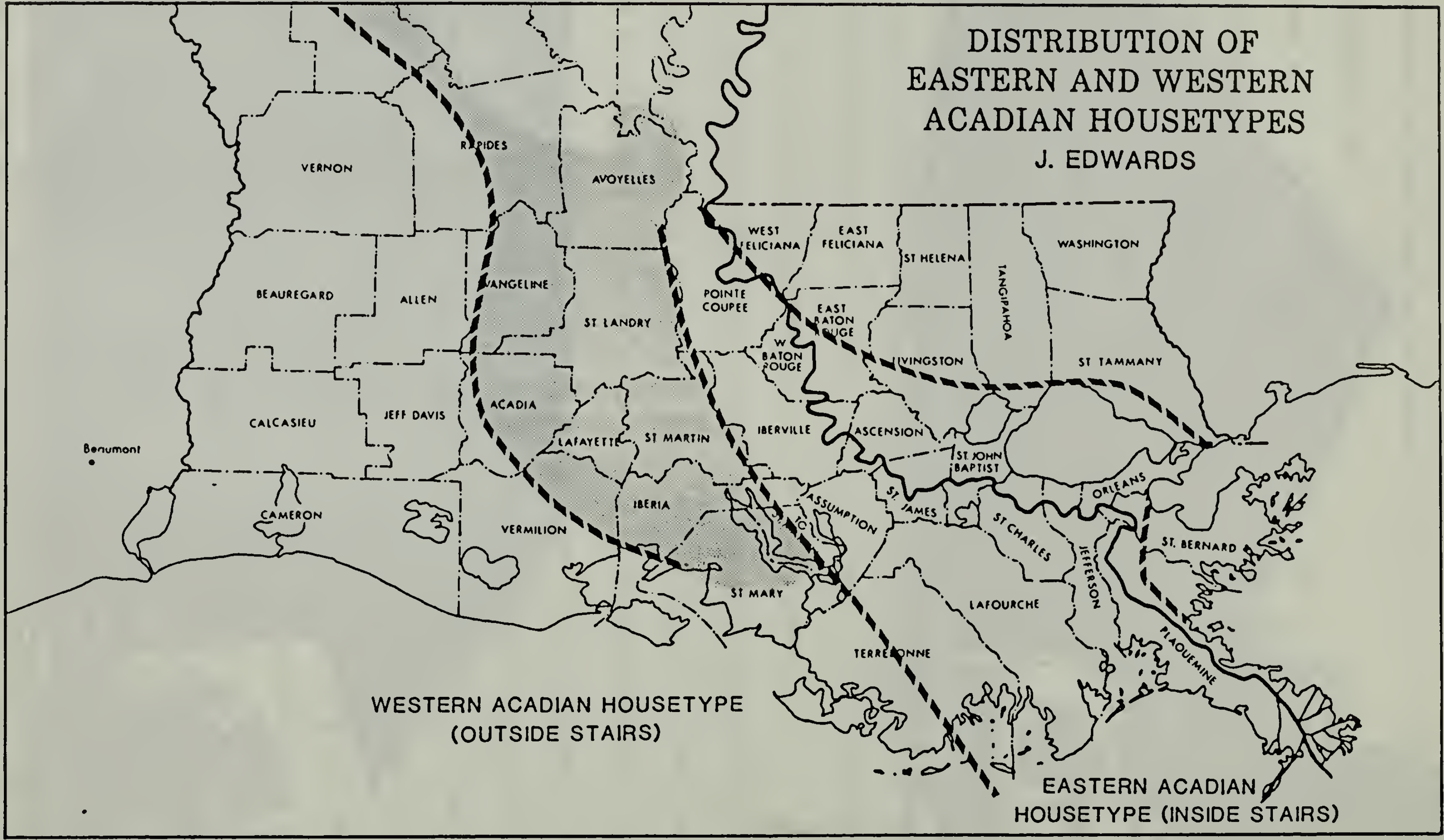

DISTRIBUTION OF
EASTERN AND WESTERN
ACADIAN HOUSETYPES
J. EDWARDS
VERNON
RAPIDES
AVOYELLES
WEST FELICIANA
EAST FELICIANA
ST HELENA
TANGIPAHOA
WASHINGTON
BEAUREGARD
ALLEN
EVANGELINE
ST LANDRY
POINTE COUPEE
EAST BATON ROUGE
W BATON ROUGE
LIVINGSTON
ST TAMMANY
CALCASIEU
JEFF DAVIS
ACADIA
LAFAYETTE
ST MARTIN
IBERVILLE
ASCENSION
ST JOHN BAPTIST
Beaumont
CAMERON
VERMILION
IBERIA
ASSUMPTION
ST. JAMES
ST CHARLES
ORLEANS
ST. BERNARD
JEFFERSON
ST MARY
LAFOURCHE
TERREBONNE
PLAQUEMINE
WESTERN ACADIAN HOUSETYPE
(OUTSIDE STAIRS)
EASTERN ACADIAN
HOUSETYPE (INSIDE STAIRS)

FIG. 30 A

provided practical living space. It was here in the traditional grenier, or grain storage loft (in the French farm house) that the garçonnière was established. The young women of the family slept on the ground floor behind the parents' bedroom, while the boys had direct access to the outside from the loft. However, if the family had more girls than boys, the loft might well become a fillèiere instead!

That access was provided in two different ways. In eastern Acadiana, along Bayou Lafourche and on the Acadian Coast, a ladder or a short, steep flight of stairs was inserted within the house itself--usually in a rear room. In western Acadiana, however, the stairs to the loft were placed on the front gallery. This may be due to the fact that the more remote western houses were generally smaller in size and placing stairs on the gallery saved badly needed space within the house. I suspect, however that there is another reason for the geographical patterning in Acadian stairways.

It was one of the necessities of building in Louisiana that the house be raised above the ground in order to provide long-term protection for its sills. In the raised Class II Creole house of the period, access to the main floor was gained via a flight of stairs between the ground and the first floor gallery (Fig. 31). It was generally placed directly under the gallery roof. By the time the Acadians had arrived in Louisiana, the Class II house had become déclassé in the area around New Orleans. This was because that area was dominated by French settlers and French Creoles, and to these relative sophistocates, the sharply broken pitch of the Mississippi Valley Class II house had a rough-hewn and provincial look about it. In the bayous and prairies of Western Acadiana, however, the Class II house was the most elegant form on the landscape. There was no

A LOUISIANA CLASS II HOUSE, PAINTED C. 1832 by S.M. LEE

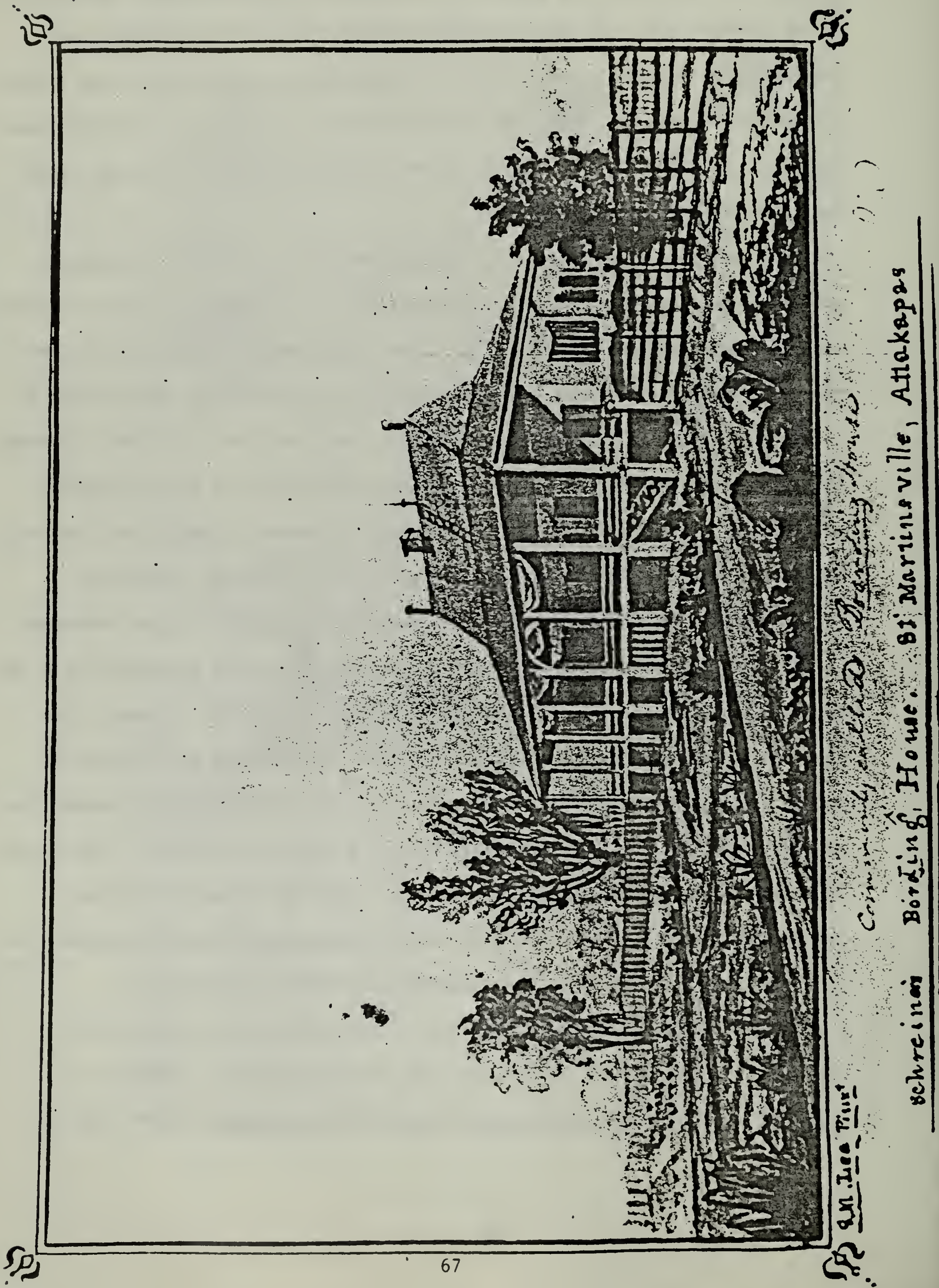

S.M. Lee Pinx't
Commonly called Boarding House
Schreiner Bording House. St Martinsville, Attakapas

FIG. 31

reason why an exterior stair should not be copied directly from this prestigious form. Thus, the exterior stairway was adapted more as a symbol of elegance than for any specific functional cause. One other factor may have played a part, however. It has been noted that in the Creole vernacular architecture of Haiti one occasionally finds exterior stairs and ladders leading to the loft of the house.

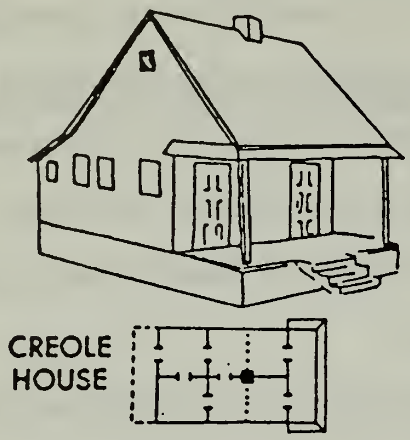
Increasingly, Acadian cottages adopted the use of multiple doors in the front. Like the Caribbean Creole dwellings, the front doors could be used to direct cooling breezes through the house (Fig's. 30,32, & 33).

Yet another Creole feature which was adopted by the Acadian builder was the use of a rear cabinet-loggia range. Rear cabinet rooms and rear in-antis loggias were a feature of the vernacular architecture of both the Spanish and the French West Indies, as well as Louisiana. Although the first and second generation Acadian houses seem not to have utilized this additional form of expansion, it was being adopted by many Acadians in the earliest decades of the nineteenth century. With the adoption of full-length galleries, cabinets, and loggias the Acadian house now fell well within the definition of Louisiana Creole architecture.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Acadian house and assumed the familiar form which still survives today on the countryside of Acadiana. The third generation house was now characterized by a two or three room plan, increasingly identical to that of the small Creole house. Single room Acadian houses became increasingly rare until they almost disappearedaltogether.

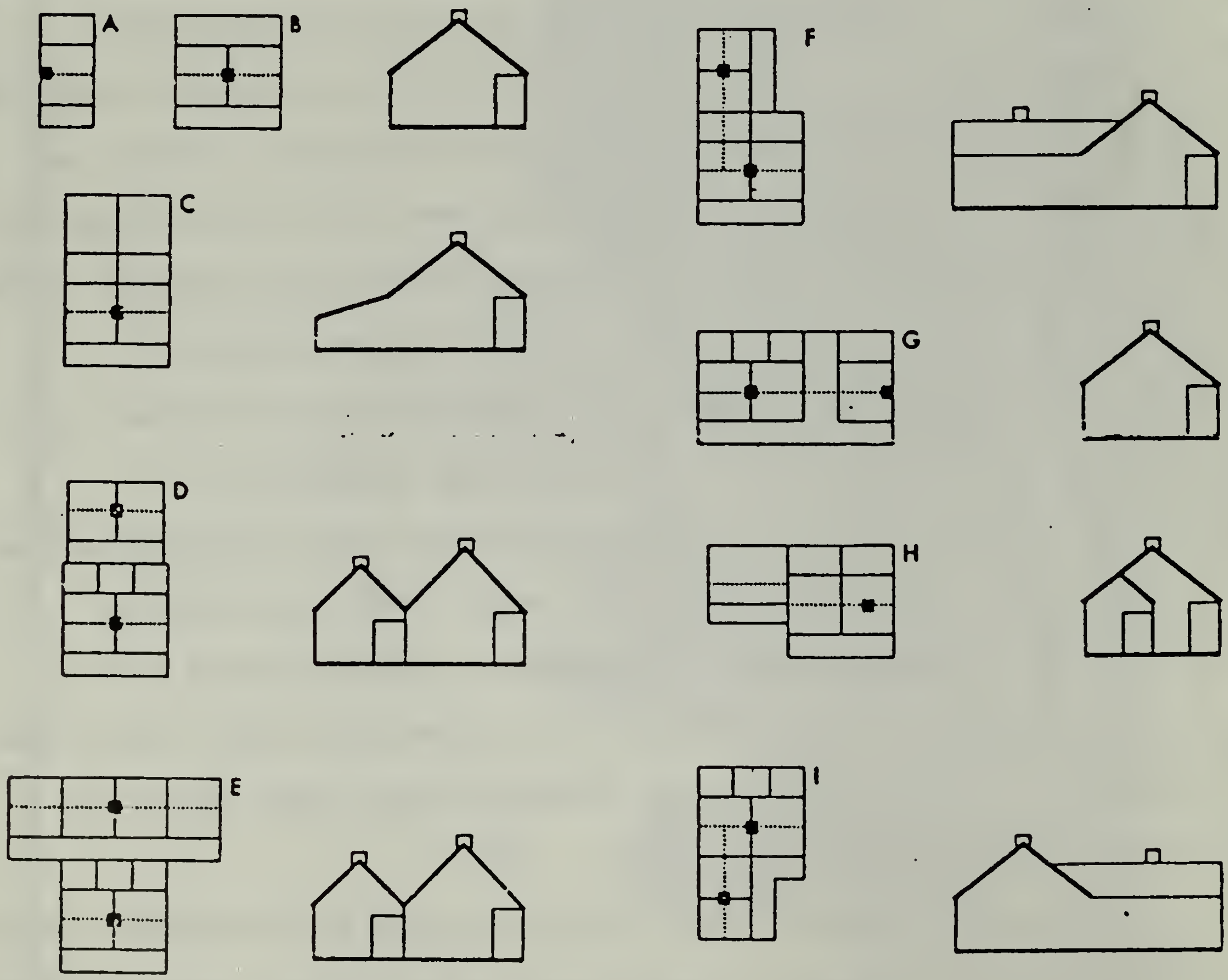
If one separates the various components of the Third Generation Acadian House: roof truss, salle-et-chambre plan, in-set gallery, internal chimney,

FRENCH TYPES



Any model may have piers from a few inches to several feet high. Any may also have a false gallery. Most lacked ridge poles, when possible to observe. None had occupied attics; though, earlier they did.

EXPANSION OF THE CREOLE HOUSE, AT FRENCH SETTLEMENT



(Source:Newton:1972)

FIG. 32

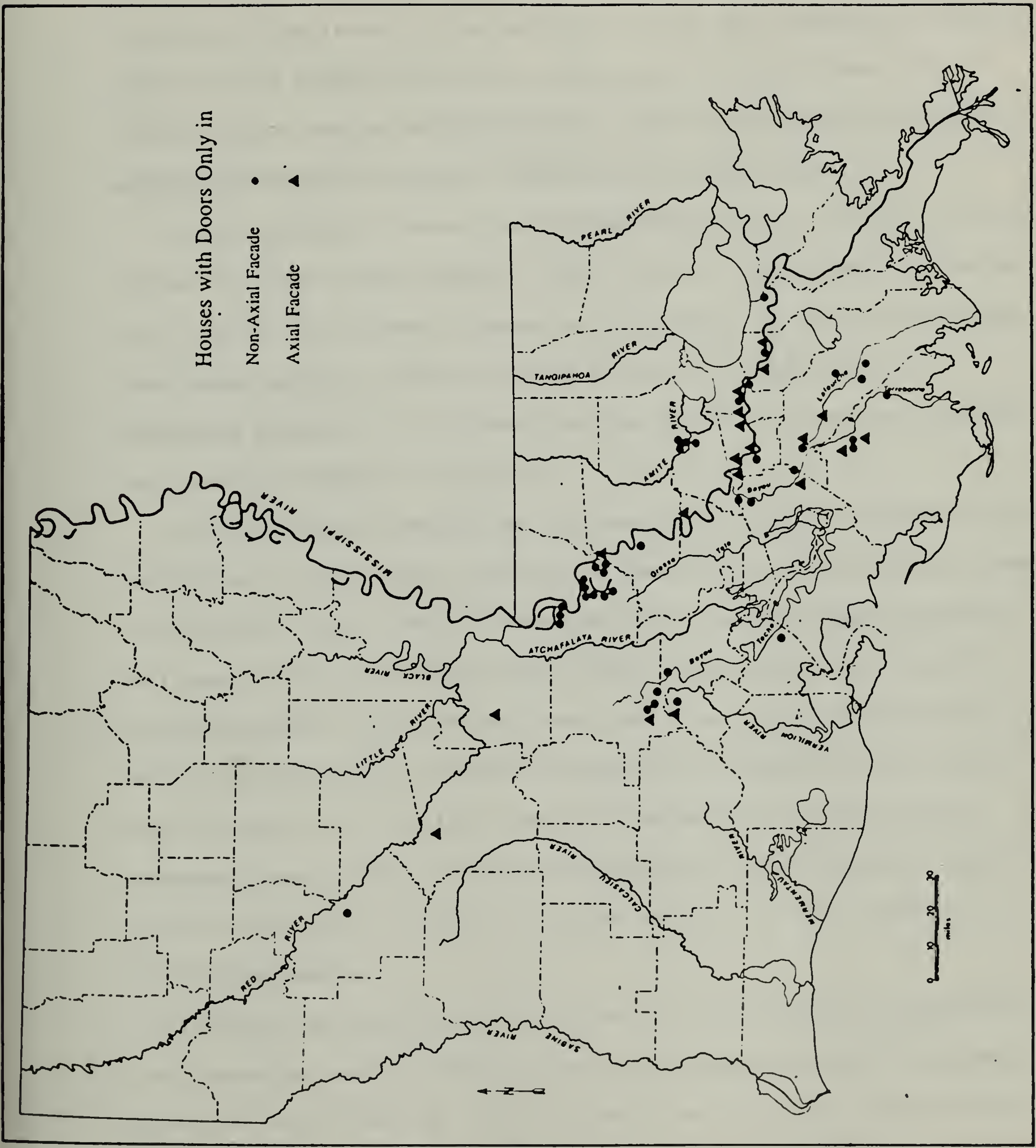

Houses with Doors Only in
Non-Axial Facade ●
Axial Facade ▲
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
PEARL RIVER
TANGIPAHOA RIVER
AMITE RIVER
BLACK RIVER
LITTLE RIVER
RED RIVER
ATCHAFALAYA RIVER
CALCASIEU RIVER
SABINE RIVER
VERMILION RIVER
MERMENTAU RIVER
Bayou Teche
Grosse Tete
Bayou Lafourche
Terrebonne
0 10 20 30
miles
N

FIG. 33

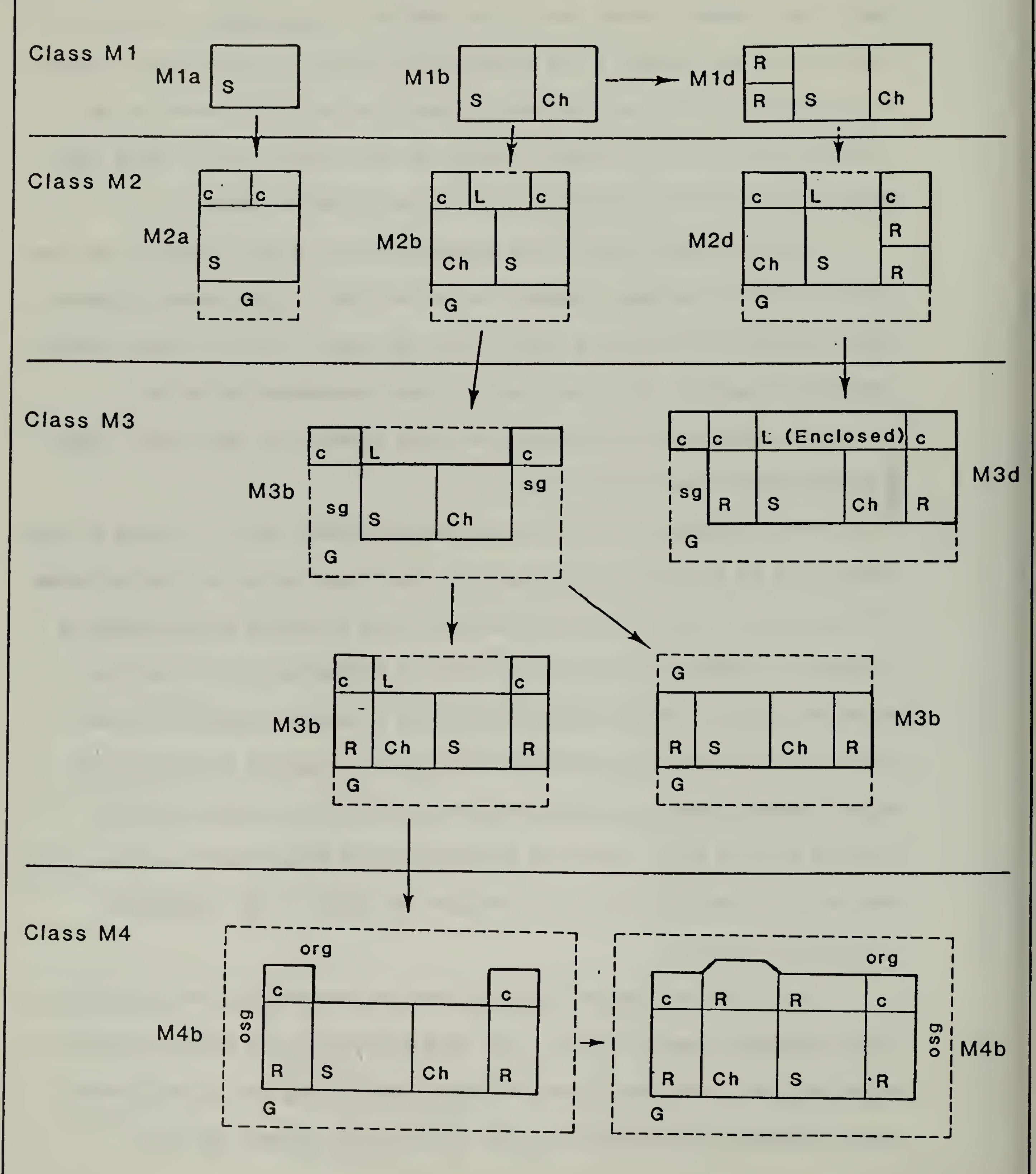
front stairway, framing technology, three-baton shuttered windows and doors, rear cabinet rooms, use of the loft as a garçonnière, placement of two doors in the facade. It is possible to trace each element to a separate origin, all of which together well reflect the tortured history of the Acadian People. USE AN EXPLODED DIAGRAM OF THE ACADIAN HOUSE, FRAME VIEW, SHOWING THE DISTINCT ORIGINS OF EACH OF THE COMPONENT PARTS.

In the nineteenth century the Acadians adopted a new floorplan for the typical two-room cottage (compare Fig's. 34 & 35). Along Bayou Lafourche and in the River Parishes, a module with two equal, or nearly equal sized room became popular. This was clearly a folk accommodation to the increasing popularity of Palladian/Georgian symmetry in the larger Creole and plantation houses of the state.

In the nineteenth century the big sugar planters were in search of more arable land to bring under cultivation. They began buying up Acadian farms on the natural levees. George Washington Cable described Point Bancée, a settlement of about 150 people who lived in "adobe homes with thatched roofs and gables." There seems to have been a natural antipathy between both the culture and the economic system of the Acadians and the Creole sugar planters. The inevitable conflict was resolved in favor of the planters in most cases. Not only did many Cajuns favor isolation, many were more or less forced to accept it through the power of the industrial agricultural system.

It should not be assumed that all Acadian descendants were subsistence level peasants, however. Even in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many prospered. Some of those living along the natural levees became planters. In Lafayette Parish, sixty-eight percent of the

The Evolution of M1b Creole Floorplans


Class M1
M1a
S
M1b
S
Ch
M1d
R
R
S
Ch
Class M2
M2a
c
c
S
G
M2b
c
L
c
Ch
S
G
M2d
c
L
c
R
Ch
S
R
G
Class M3
M3b
c
L
c
sg
sg
S
Ch
G
c
c
L (Enclosed)
c
sg
R
S
Ch
R
G
M3d
M3b
c
L
c
R
Ch
S
R
G
G
R
S
Ch
R
G
M3b
Class M4
M4b
org
c
c
osg
R
S
Ch
R
G
org
c
R
R
c
R
Ch
S
R
osg
G
M4b

MLE, Carto. Sect., LSU

FIG. 34

The Evolution of Symmetrical Creole Floorplans c. 1750-1860

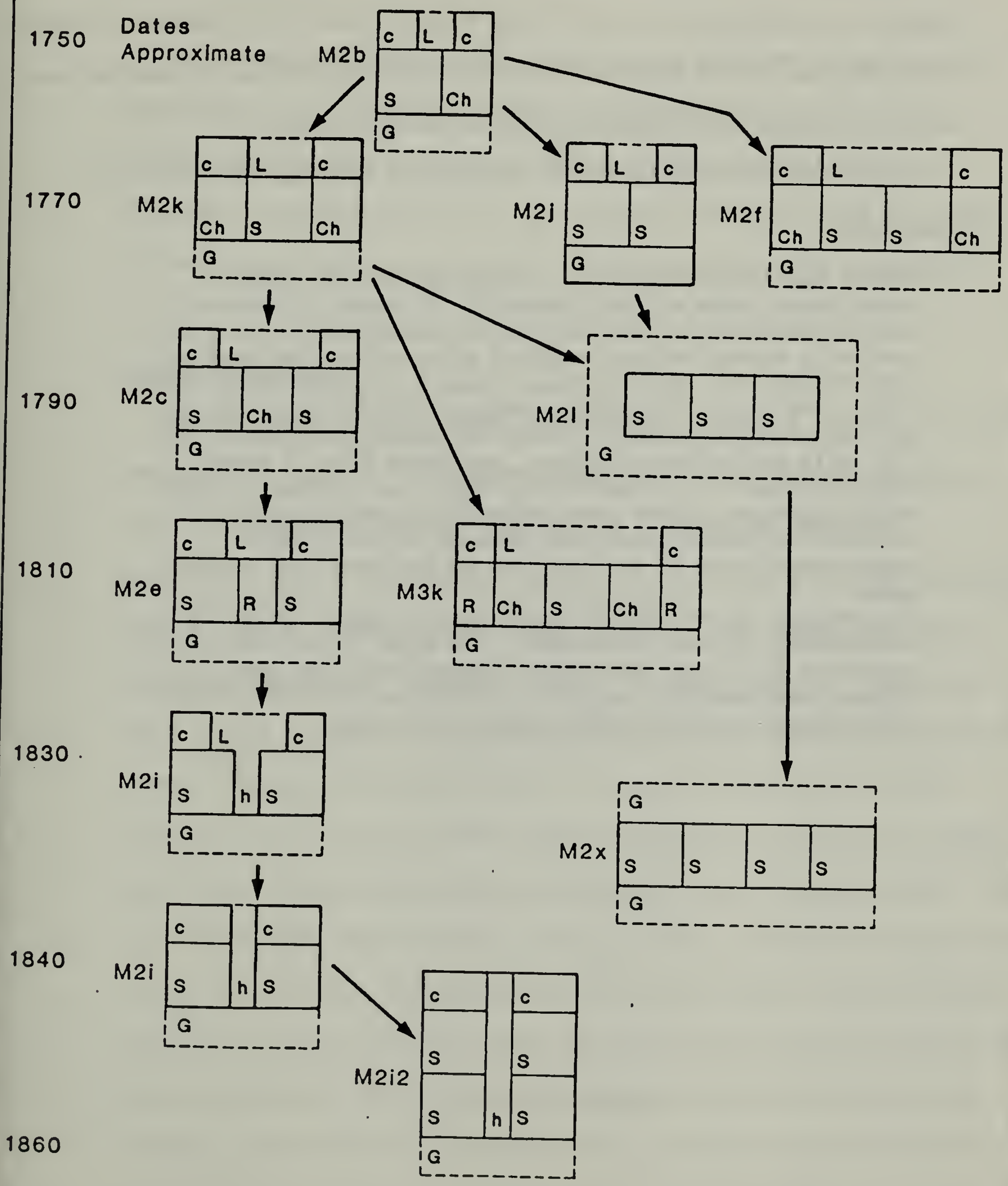

1750
Dates
Approximate
M2b
c L c
S Ch
G
1770
M2k
c L c
Ch S Ch
G
M2j
c L c
S S
G
M2f
c L c
Ch S S Ch
G
1790
M2c
c L c
S Ch S
G
M2l
S S S
G
1810
M2e
c L c
S R S
G
M3k
c L c
R Ch S Ch R
G
1830
M2i
c L c
S h S
G
M2x
G
S S S S
G
1840
M2i
c c
S h S
G
M2i2
c c
S S
S h S
G
1860

FIG. 35

slave-holders in 1850 were Acadian, with an average of about six slaves per family (Baker 1978: 118). Other Acadians turned to raising cattle on vacheries on the prairies west of the Teche. Unlike the linear settlements of the Bayous, on the prairies the settlement pattern was a dispersed one, with small groups of houses gathered in anses or coves.

The interior of the houses of the prairie Acadians were neat and presentable;

> Madame Baptist Clement wore rawhide shoes [poor Acadians wore wooden shoes or went barefoot]. Of house furniture: A showy mantlepiece of stained and varnished wood. Four brown panels in darker colored moulding going around the side of the chimney with red pilasters. Clean hand-scrubbed cypress floor with neat... [original obscured] mats of plaited rags at the doors and strips of woven rag carpet here and there. The walls and ceiling of plain, unpainted pine. A square army oil cloth for a hearth rag. Neat, plain homes. Locally made wardrobes, turned post bedsteds of stained wood with testers, oak chairs with hide bottoms, white fringed counterpains made of cotton grown on the farm, and feather beds.
>
> The gallery of the Acadian house is a workshop for both the housekeeper and the breadwinner. The loom, the spinning wheel, the carot [?]. From the joists overhead hang the pods of tobacco seed used for next year's planting [Perique tobacco became popular about 1790]. (Cable M.S.: 103).

TECHNIQUES OF CONSTRUCTION

Jay Edwards

Two primary methods of construction were employed by Acadians in Louisiana in the second half of the eighteenth century. One was suitable for temporary shelter, the other for permanent shelter. Although not considered ideal, the temporary method lasted well into the latter part of the nineteenth century in some parts of Acadiana.

Temporary shelters

The earliest Acadian houses were crude affairs of one or two rooms. Temporary houses were mostly constructed with the Poteaux en Terre (post in the ground) method (Fig. 13). A series of square or rectangular posts, four to six inches on a side, were mounted in holes or in a trench. Heavy planks, roughly four by ten inches were also sometimes employed in the same manner, in which case the method was called Pieux en Terre or Plaunche Debout en Terre (upright plank in the ground). The posts were sunk about two and one half feet into the earth, and they were set rather close together but they did not touch. The builder often left the posts unsquared below the ground level. The top of each post was cut into a half lap-joint in order to receive the wall plate. The laps were placed on the interior side--the wall plate exposed on the exterior side. Once the walls were erected, heavy cross pieces, called tie beams (Poutre en entrait) were placed across the building, tying the walls together. Their ends were morticed into the wall plates or lapped across them. They were sometimes clenched between two plates. A smaller house may have had only two or three tie beams.

Exactly how the roof support system of the earliest Acadian houses was erected has not been recorded. Although the walls of some early buildings survive, the original roof structures seem to have all disappeared. If the Acadians followed the pattern of the Creoles, they mounted pairs of heavy rafters on the wall plates or tie beam ends. A roof ridge was probably employed, in which case it was mounted on heavy vertical king posts set in the middle of the tie beams.

The roofs of early Acadian houses along Bayou Lafourche were thatched according to nineteenth century eye-witness accounts. Some covered their roofs with bark or with wooden planks called Merrains. Merrains were rough hewn, between three and five feet in length and a foot or more wide (Fig. 14). A wooden peg was driven through the upper end. It was cut off flush with the top of the plank but below it extending down so that it could be notched over a horizontal lathing strip. Charles Peterson (1965:33) and Robert-Lionel Segun (1968) have traced plaunche debout en terre construction back to Canada, where it was used for cabins, barns and stables as early as the seventeenth century. A house built in this method was said to be entourrage de pieux, or "surrounded with planks."

The spaces between the wall posts or planks--often quite close together--were filled with bousillage. This is a mixture of clay, lime, Spanish moss, and, occasionally shells or animal hair. The method of making bousillage was learned from the Indians in the earliest years of settlement. Bousillage was probably first adapted to European buildings by Father Paul du Ru, S.J. in the years 1699-1700. In his early attempts to Christianize the Indians of the lower Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast, du Ru had chapels built in many Indian villages. Since they were constructed by Indian labor for the most part, and since Indigenous houses were plastered with bousillage, the technique of its manufacture soon passed to the French. Le Page du Pratz described the construction of the Indian house and temple in the following words;

> Canes are attached on the lower sides or walls at around eight inches apart, across, up to the height of the pole of which I have spoken, which forms the height of the walls. These canes being thus attached, clay mortar is made of earth in which sufficient Spanish moss is put. These walls have no more than four inches of thickness (quoted in Wilson 1971:87-88).

The walls of many Acadian houses were left uncovered. The bousillage and timber frame was exposed to the elements. This must have required annual replastering, but that is not unknown in other cultures where mud construction is employed. In later years the walls of the Acadian house were covered with weatherboards, except if a gallery was employed. There, the bousillage was whitewashed, but not covered with planks in most cases.

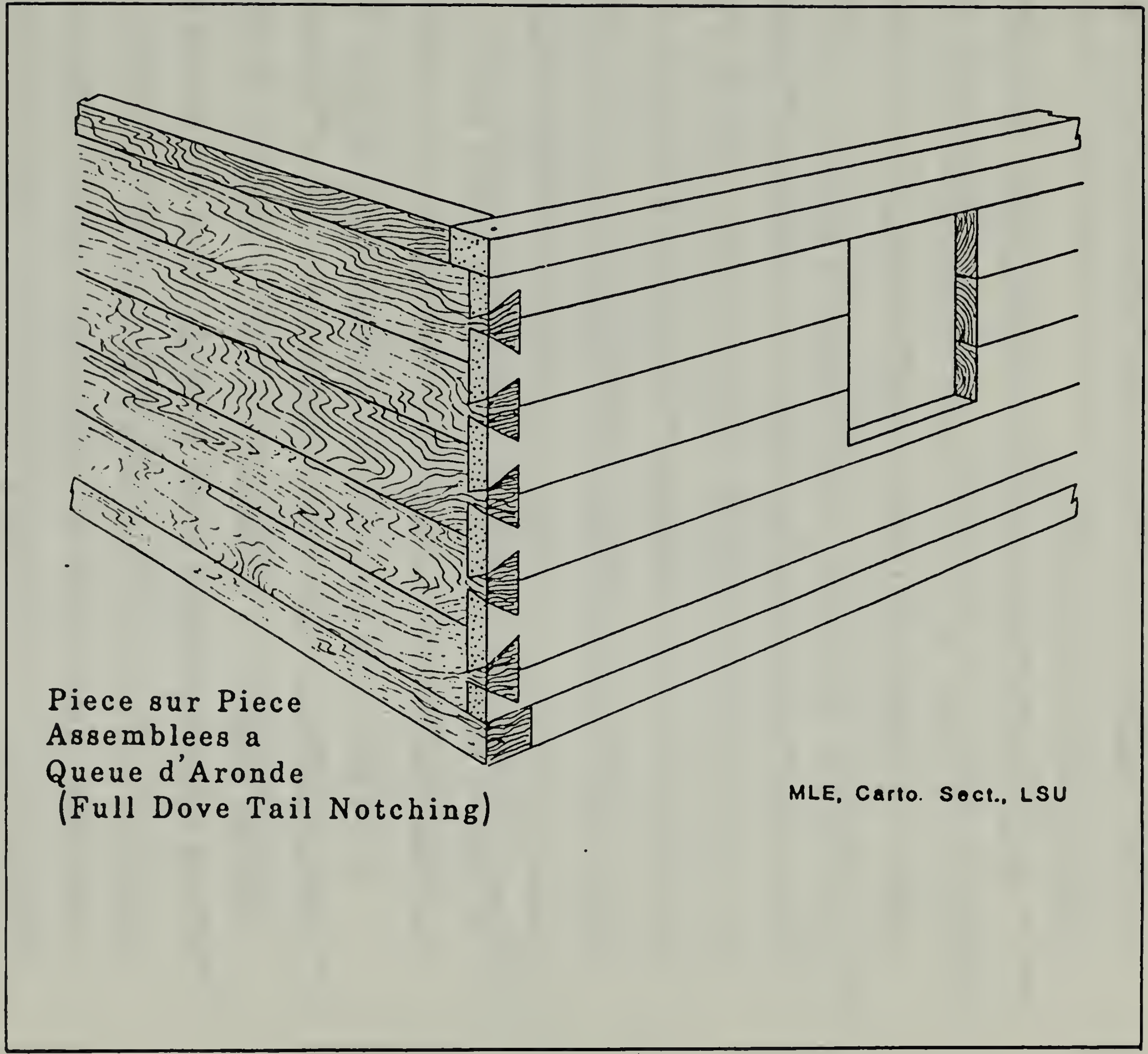
The floor of many early Acadian houses was beaten earth. In some cases the floor was covered with planks or bricks. A large internal fireplace and chimney was used for heat and even cooking in the colder months. It was constructed of a stick frame and bousillage covering. Most cooking was done outside in a separate building called a Cuisine (Kitchen). Life in the early Acadian house must have been primitive at best. Few windows were used in the houses of the poorer people. They must have been unbearably hot in summer. Many houses had no ceiling boards so the heat of the fireplace escaped into the attic space and then out through the thatch--the houses must also have been very cold in the winter. The walls were low, the roof leaked in heavy rainstorms, and the floor must have been difficult to keep dry and clean. The house provided inadequate insulation by today's standards, and the walls and roof must have been in constant repair. To my knowledge only a single photograph of a pioneering Acadian cabin survives. It is published in Marchand (1943).

I know of no documentary or physical evidence indicating that the Acadians employed pièce sur pièce construction for houses in Louisiana (Fig. 36). Creole houses built in this method survive--Pointe Coupee Museum, for example, and the Acadians certainly used the method for barn construction. Only a few of the many hundreds of Acadian pièce sur pièce barns now survive. One is preserved and may be seen at Jefferson Island, near New Iberia.

The Timber Frame Acadian House

The frame of the permanent Acadian house was somewhat more complex than that of its pioneering cousin. In its method of construction the "half timber" Acadian cottage is essentially indistinguishable from the Louisiana French Creole cottage. Whether the Acadians merely copied the previously established method of construction which they found here in Louisiana, or whether they were already familiar with its basic techniques in Arcadia and in the West Indies is unknown.

Although the basic methods of construction of the Acadian house have been described by many, it is only recently through a close



Piece sur Piece
Assemblees a
Queue d'Aronde
(Full Dove Tail Notching)

MLE, Carto. Sect., LSU

FIG. 36

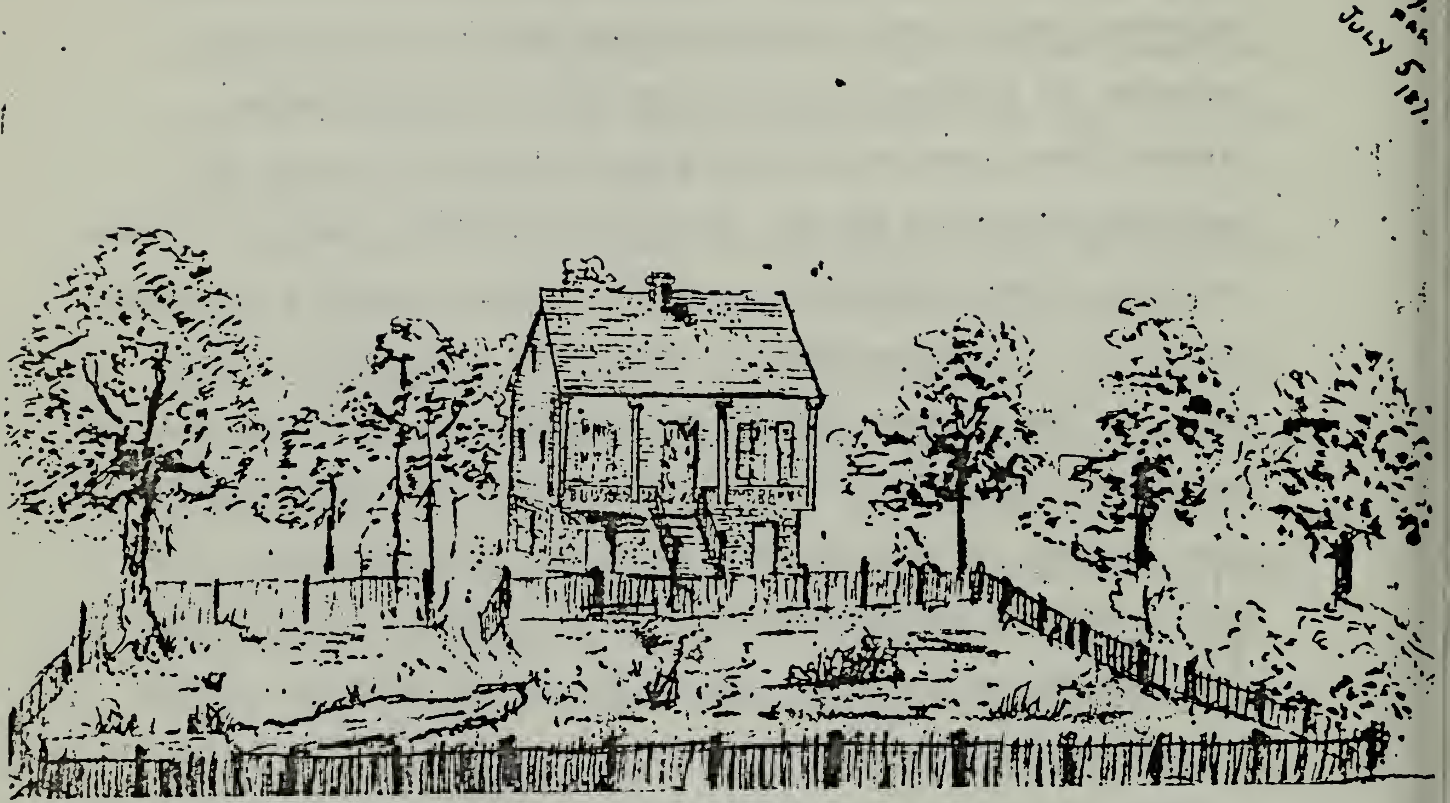
examination of the details of a large sample of surviving eighteenth century and early nineteenth century houses that the processes of construction have become better known. The Acadian/Creole house was an intricate composition which embodied many subtilities. Not all of its mysteries have yet been revealed.

Three levels of Cajun houses may be distinguished. The first were purely Folk Houses. At the lower end of the socio-economic scale Acadians continued to build their houses themselves, with the aid of their families and friends. These buildings are generally small--of one or two rooms--and they show the marks of non- professional carpentry. The timbers are often rough-hewn and less perfectly fitted than those found in the work of a professional. The techniques of joinery are simple rather than sophistocated. Some examples of early French folk houses still survive. The Dudley LeBlanc house in Acadian Village is one example. Although it is of Creole form, the Lemelle house in Opelousas also provides and example of this level of construction.

By the early nineteenth century the houses of the majority of Acadians were being constructed according to the age-old traditions of vernacular carpentry. A professional builder or carpenter was employed to direct the construction of the building. He may have brought his own labor crew to the site, or he may have utilized the labor of the family of the owner. Nevertheless, the builder was primarily responsible for the overall form of the building within the limitations imposed by the owner. He was also responsible for its construction. Since many builders were either semi-professional or full-time professionals, their work shows the mark of sophistocation of the person long-practiced in the traditional skills of house construction. Theirs was knowledge passed down from the age-old practices of medieval Guild carpentry. Despite their professionalism, however, the vernacular carpenter was building for an architecturally un-sophistocated clientel. The houses which resulted were not built in one of the fashionable styles of the day, such as Greek Revival, Federal, or Queen Ann Style. Acadian houses were, for the most part, simple and unadorned (Fig. 37). If some pretension to style could be purchased by the owner, it took the form of millwork, shipped out of the lumber mills of New Orleans. For example a Federal style mantle and chimney surround might be used, turned porch posts and simple decorative trim in the form of brackets and ballustrades to dress up the front porch. Other than this, the Acadian house remained essentially vernacular in form and utilitarian in function.

The third and highest level of Acadian building practice was that enjoyed by the educated and wealthy elite. Some Acadians became sufficiently wealthy so that they could purchase symbols of international styling. Professional architects, or local builders were enlisted to construct large raised cottages or plantation houses. Occasionally, Classic revival houses were constructed, but the majority of Acadians continued to build in the familiar pattern of the traditional Louisiana house. Some borrowed from the Creole style. Despanet de Blanc's Lady of the Lake plantation house in St. Martin Parish (now destroyed), was one of the finer examples.

Raised Acadian style houses such as that of Acadian House at Longfellow-Evangeline State Park, DuChamp in St. Martin Parish (now


Laf. Par.
July 5 187.

de Lapouyade's sketch of his birthplace—*Courtesy Louisiana State University Department of Archives and Manuscripts*

A TYPICAL RAISED ACADIAN COTTAGE CA 1875

FROM THE BAYOU LAFOURCHE AREA

FIG. 37

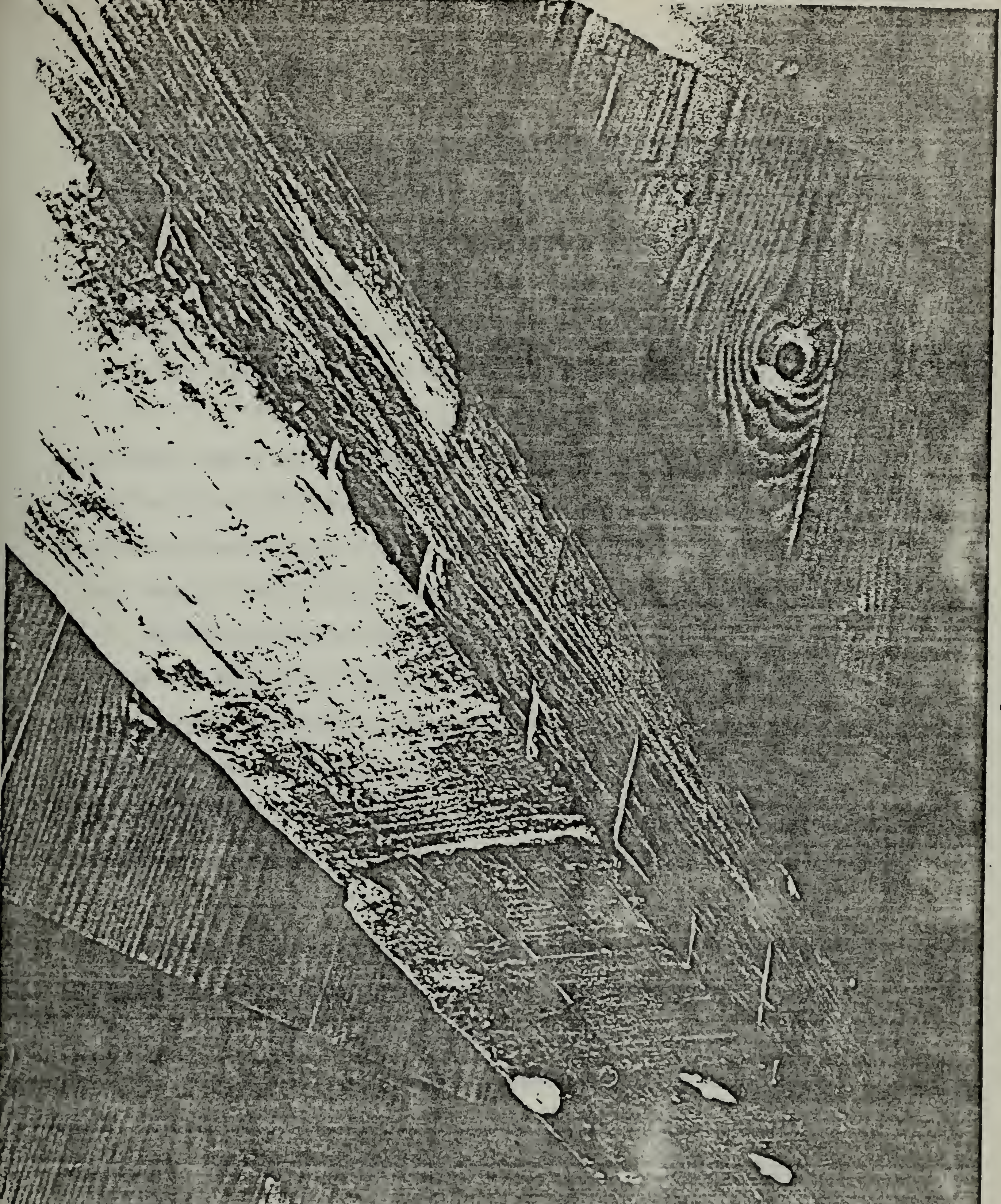
destroyed) and Mulberry Grove in Ascension Parish were even more popular. They are basically expanded Acadian houses, raised a full story on a brick base. Although houses at this scale often had finer architectural details--decorative door and window surrounds, fan lights, side lights, Greek style dental moldings under the eaves- -in other respects they conformed rather strictly to the basic form of the humble Acadian cottage. It was as if the successful Acadian could not afford to distance himself too much from the masses of the population, not quite so fortunate as himself.

A final phase of development of the Acadian house should be mentioned. This has to do with the syncretism of Anglo and Acadian styles in the nineteenth century. The influence of Anglo-American styles began to enter Acadiana at about the time of the Louisiana Purchase. Immigrants born in England and the former American colonies purchased plantations in Louisiana. Many of the Americans who settled here were strongly influenced by the indigenous Acadian style. However, most Anglo settlers also held onto elements of their own architectural traditions as well--the result was a syncretism or blending of the two cultures in the form of new buildings. Probably the finest surviving example is Shadows-on-the-Teche in Iberia Parish. The house was built between 1831 and 1835. It is constructed as a raised English country house with Greek Revival styling, but it also has the floorplan, in-set gallery, and decorative details of Acadian architecture.

Whenever professional builders were employed, the construction of a house occurred in two phases. After initial planning had been done, it was time to bring timber to the building site. The timber was purchased from a local mill, but it often had to be transported many miles over bad roads--difficult even under the best of conditions. It appears that a standard method of acquiring heavy timber was established. The following description applies to all except the first level of Acadian architecture (folk):

One distinctive aspect of Acadian carpentry is the fact that many of the timbers and rough-hewn boards which we find in old houses were hewn with an adz or broad ax on one or two sides and sawn on the other two sides. This curious situation is repeated too often to ingore it as some quirk of an individual vernacular carpenter. It was, rather, basic to the construction process. It is explained by the way in which trees were reduced to timbers by the carpenters. After a tree was felled, it was squared on the spot. The carpenter began by making a series of horizontal chops across one side of the log. That side was reduced to a flat surface by chipping to the depth of the cuts. These cuts are still visible on the hewn surfaces of the heavy timbers in many Acadian houses. When the first surface of the log had been hewn flat, it was turned over and the process was repeated until all four sides were flat and the log was square in cross-section. At that time the log could be transported to the site of the saw mill, where it might be sawn into planks or timbers four to six inches thick. On all planks cut from the exteriors of these logs, one side is cut with a saw and the other is hewn.

Note that quite different kinds of saws were employed in Acadiana. The earliest was the PIT SAW, which left heavy cut marks which are not


Bottom
Side

ROOF TIMBER HAND HEWN (BOTTOM) AND PIT SAWN (SIDE)

FIG. 38

parallel with one another. Later, water powered and steam powered SASH SAWS were used. Like pit saws, they cut with the blade held vertically, but their saw cuts were more even. Later still, rotary saws were employed. They, of course, leave curved saw marks. It is not unusual to find earlier houses with all of these patterns in their timbers. The particular combination may be in part due to the availability of the different forms of mill in the local area.

Another curiousity one notices in old Louisiana timber frame houses is that many of the boards and planks have distinctive marks about four inches long, completely across one end. Once again, these surface marks are explained by traditional carpentry practice. When a squared tree had been reduced to heavy blanks and beams, they were often NOT completely separated from the tree. In other words, they were sawn most, but not quite all the way through the length of the planks. The result was a tree cut into three or four planks, but with the planks still attached together at one end (occasionally in the middle). In this way, masses of heavy timber could be more easily transported to the building site on ox-carts or as "drags". Once received by the carpenter at the building sight, the planks were split apart with wedges. This left a distinctive mark on one end of each plank at the point where it had been split. Those marks are still visible in the floor boards of many old Acadian houses.

The process of building construction has been described by Peterson (1965), Robison (1975:63-77), Thurman (1984) and Edwards (1985 Chap II). The reader should also refer to Peter Moogk's excellent little book, Building a House In New France (1977). Aside from the use of saw mills, described above, only hand tools were employed. These consisted of the broad ax, the mortising ax, the adz, the two-man saw, the buck saw, the brace, the auger, mallets, wedges and chisels, and the froe or draw knife. Crude carpenter's squares, plumb bobs, string, shovels and pick axes were also used in leveling and squaring the house.

The frame of the house was entirely pegged together so that the structure became a single unit which could even be turned upside down without destroying its integrety. The builder began by levelling the site and by measuring the exterior floor plan of the house. The base module was always a rectangle, usually wider than it was deep.

Heavy hand-hewn sills (soles) up to a foot on a side were mounted on piliers of cypress blocks called des. The sills were leveled and lapped or morticed together at the corners. They were raised about 18" to 3' above the ground, sometimes higher. Sills for the gallery and the cabinet-loggia range were added to the front and rear. Floor joists were mounted across the frame from front to rear. Each joist was set into a notch on the inside of the sill and secured with a vertical peg. Joists for the floor of the porch and cabinets were mounted to the outside of the sill. Sometimes a separate sill was nailed or pegged to the main sill to accommodate these extra members. The sills of the gallery floor generally sloped downward towards the front in order to carry off rain water, while the main floor joists had to be level.

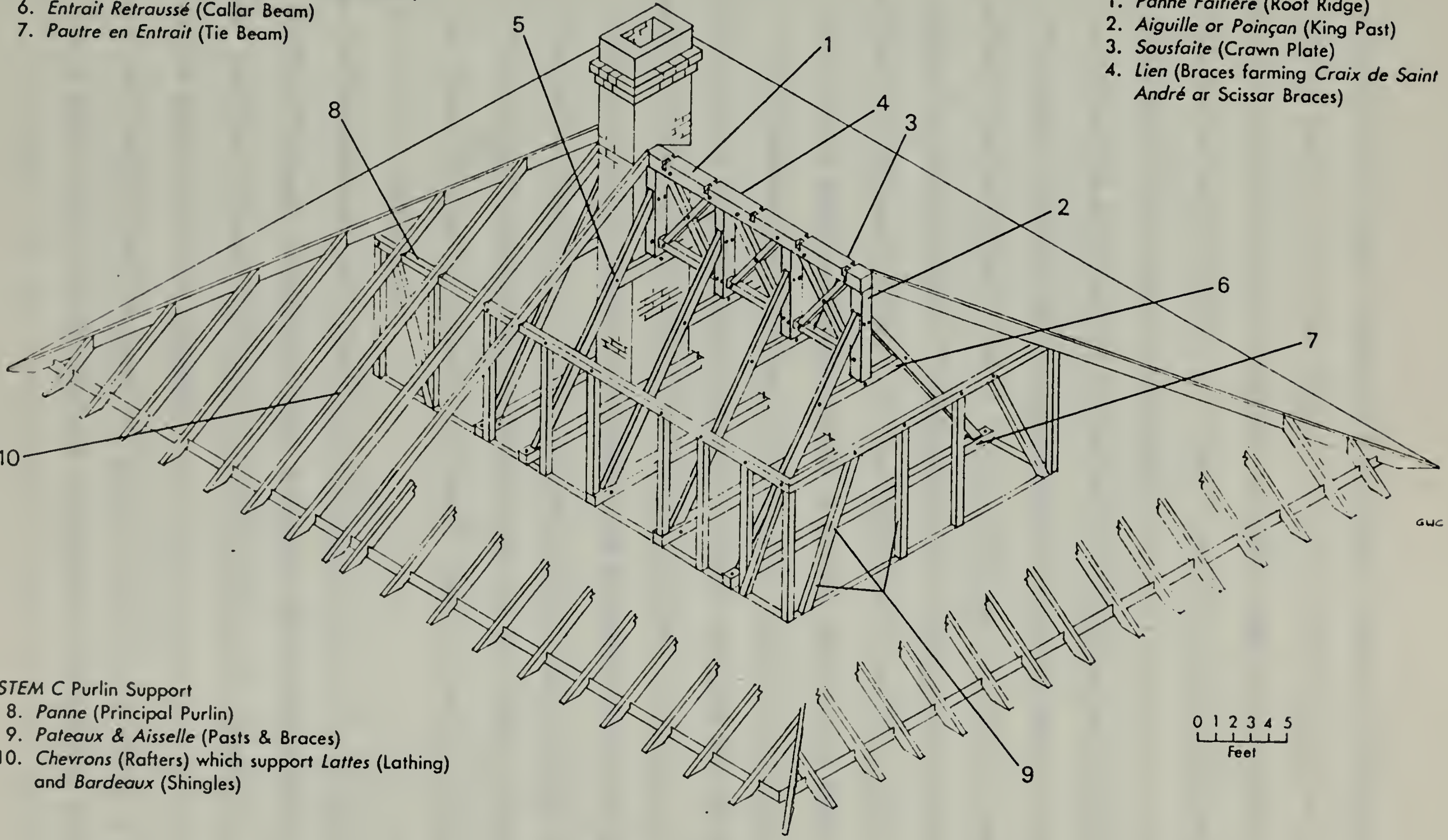
Corner posts were raised at the intersections of the sills. Each post position was fitted with a mortice hole. The auger hole was chiseled out to fit a rectangular tenon in the foot of the post. Other posts were erected at the locations of doors and windows. A post on either side would form the frame for the openings. Each corner post was stiffened against wind pressure by the addition of long, diagonal braces which were morticed into the sills just as the posts were.

Heavy wall plates were mounted atop the posts. Ceiling joists were then morticed into the plates. These joists were generally decorated with a bead along each lower corner. These beaded joists were exposed to the view of those in the house. This style of covering the ceiling of the rooms of the house is known as the plafond a la française, or "French Roof." It derives from the ceilings of the great sixteenth century Chateaux of the Loire valley. The ceiling of the humble Acadian cottage is a distant survival of those elegant times.

Throughout the eighteenth century and first decades of the nineteenth, the roof of the Acadian house was supported by a Norman Roof Truss. The Louisiana Norman roof truss finds its origin in a variety of THROUGH PURLIN ROOF common to the border zones between Gallic and Germanic cultures. The tradition of the so-called Norman Roof developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in northern France and Southern Germany, Belgium and Holland. The evolution of the Norman Roof truss and its Louisiana derivitives has been discussed in Edwards (1985, Chap. III). In colonial Louisiana a wide variety of roof support systems were employed; all generally could be divided into three sub-systems (Fig 39): These are the Longitudinal System (A)--the roof ridge and its supports, the Transverse System (B)--the bents and trusses, and the System of Purlin Support (C)--consisting generally of a Knee Wall or post supports. Each of these systems might be complex or simple, depending on the requirements for roof support and the knowledge and skills of the carpenters.

SYSTEM B *Ferme ar Truss* (Transverse)
5. *Arbalétrier* (Principal Rafter ar Truss Blade)
6. *Entrait Retraussé* (Callar Beam)
7. *Pautre en Entrait* (Tie Beam)

SYSTEM A Ridge Support
1. *Panne Faitière* (Roof Ridge)
2. *Aiguille or Poinçan* (King Past)
3. *Sousfaite* (Crown Plate)
4. *Lien* (Braces farming *Craix de Saint André* ar Scissar Braces)



SYSTEM C Purlin Support
8. *Panne* (Principal Purlin)
9. *Pateaux & Aisselle* (Pasts & Braces)
10. *Chevrons* (Rafters) which support *Lattes* (Lathing) and *Bardeaux* (Shingles)

MICHELLE PRUDHOMME HOUSE (Ca. 1765).

ROOF FRAME ISOMETRIC

CLASS IIIa

FIG. 39

In general, colonial carpenters supported their roofs with king posts. In houses in which the roof space was not to be used by people, a full-length king post was often employed (as, for example, in Madam John's Legacy in New Orleans, 1788). The king post spanned the entire height of the attic loft and supported the roof ridge. Three of four king posts were employed to hold the roof ridge. Although sound as a support system, the full- length king post was socially awkward. It limited free use of the attic space. In most Acadian houses, the loft was used as a grenier, or a garçonièrre. It was employed for storage or as a sleeping space for teenage men. In order to function as a single room, the attic floor should be uninterrupted by posts such as the full-length king posts. To meet this need an alternate method of trussing was adopted. A short king post was mounted on a collar beam which spanned the roof truss about 2M. above the floor level. The roof ridge was still supported by a king post and yet the center of the floor space was not inturrupted by posts. This method is completely French in origin and was used both in Quebec and the French West Indies, so it was probably common in seventeenth century Acadia as well.

Once the roof truss was complete, the builder erected the rafters. These were notched over the roof ridge and pegged together. He then nailed lathing strips horizontally across the rafters. Shingles, each with a peg in its upper end, were then hung over the lathing strips to form a complete roof cover. Since the shingles were loose, they were more or less easily misplaced by falling debris or by strong winds.

Traveller's accounts reveal that the roofs leaked and had to be reparied often. For this reason it was not uncommon to see a wooden ladder permanently hooked across the roof ridge of a Louisiana house. Standing in the interior of the house, a rather surprising amount of light filtered through the shingles.

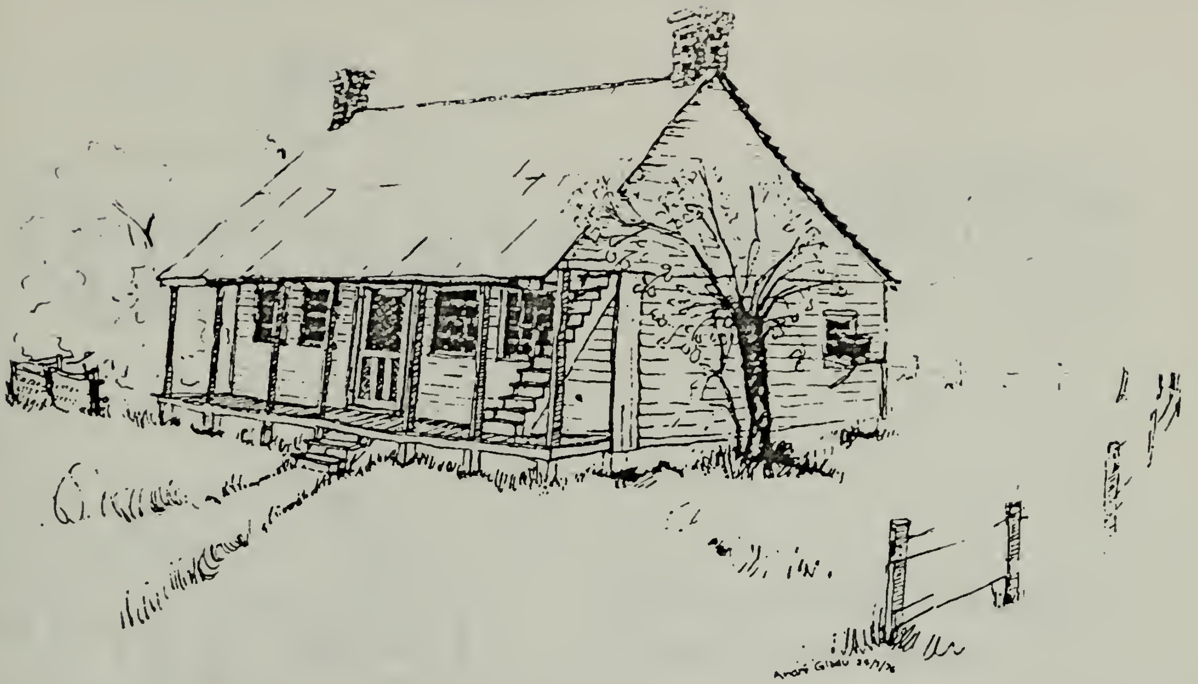
After the timber frame portion of the building was completed, the family plastered the walls with an infill of _bousillage_. First, the carpenter drilled a series of shallow holes in the faces of each timber post. Each set of holes faced another post across a gap of between one and three feet. Trapezoidal split stakes called _barreaux_ were cut so as to be only slightly longer than the distance between the posts. One end of each _barreau_ was rounded, the other cut to a point. The rounded end was fitted into the lowest hole and the other end was driven downward into the face of the opposite post with a mallet (Fig. 11). A second BARREAU was added about eight inches above the first, and so forth until the entire space between the posts was enclosed with a lattice of bars. The same process was repeated on all of the walls, both inside and out, until the entire house had been barred. Then it was time to prepare the _bousillage_.

Bousillage was almost always made by the family at the site of the house itself. As described in the anomymous Breaux manuscript, published in the Louisiana Folklore Miscellany, the making of _bousillage_ was a family affair.

> A big hole was dug in the yard. Into it went mud, moss and water. These were tramped and stirred until the consistency was right, and then the mixture was daubed into the spaces

> between the studs. Usually the space was about four inches in thickness. After the walls were sufficiently dry, they were trimmed off smoothly with a sharp spade. Then the inside walls were whitewashed (Post 1974:85-86).

A few things about the bousillage process which are not generally appreciated by modern students: bousillage had to be applied rather dry. It could not be soaking with water. Something about the consistency of bread dough was about right. Loafs of bousillage were carried from the pit to the wall and laid across and shaped around the barreaux, rather than being "daubed" on, as Post suggests. If the bousillage mixture was too wet, the bousillage shrank as it dried, leaving cracks next to the posts. To avoid these cracks the bousillage was left as dry as possible. Even in a rather small Acadian house, a tremendous amount of bousillage was required. In a house roughly 20' x 24'with a mud chimney, about 574 cubic feet (about 64 cubic yards) of bousillage had to be made, transported to the house, lifted into the walls, smoothed from both sides and finally plastered. Those who have tried to duplicate this effort in recent years are universally impressed with the rather stupendous effort required to finish a "mud" house.



Maison traditionnelle acadienne. Dans les régions des "prairies", c'est le plus ancien type de maison qui existe. Souvent construite par des esclaves, elle était faite de pièces équarries, en pin jaune, piquées à la verticale, mortaisées et chevillées. L'espace entre les pièces était "bousillée" d'un mélange de boue et de mousse espagnole. L'angle aigu du toit, la galerie avant et l'escalier extérieur qui mène au grenier sont ses principales caractéristiques. Les feuilles de tôle ont progressivement remplacées au cours des années, le recouvrement du toit qui était à l'origine en bardeaux. Parfois, à une fenêtre de la cuisine, on installait une tablette pour y laver la vaisselle.

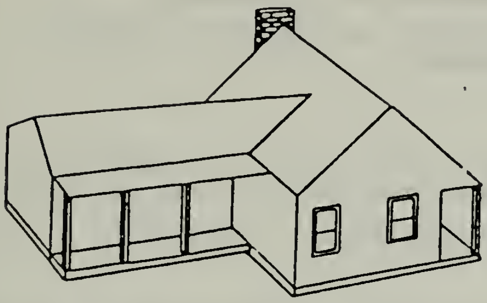
(Dessin André Gladu)

A TYPICAL CLASS III ACADIAN HOUSE FROM THE PRAIRIES. This house might be found throughout the 19th century. It is characterized by being raised above the level of the ground on pillars. The front stairs lead to the "grenier" or loft, used for sleeping space. The kitchen window has a "tablette" for drying dishes. The walls are timber frame in-filled with bousillage and covered with clapboards of yellow pine.

FIG. 40

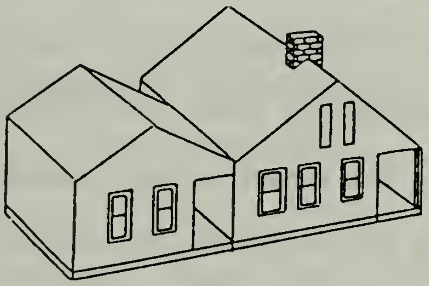
FOUR EXPANSION COMPONENTS OF LOUISIANA CREOLE ARCHITECTURE

1



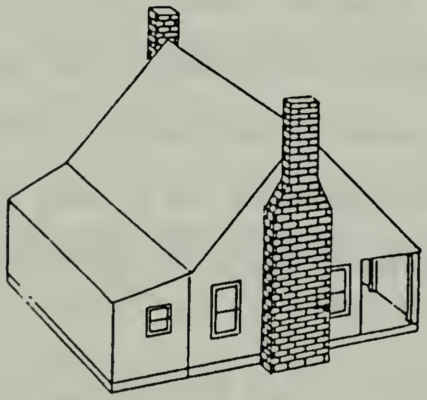
REAR LONGITUDINAL EXPANSION
(Anglo Style)

2



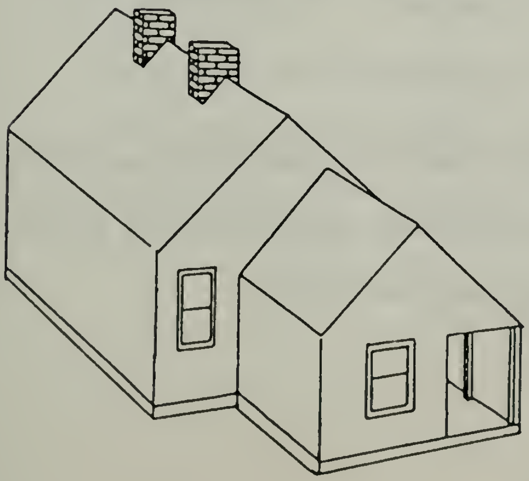
REAR TRANSVERSE EXPANSION
(West Indian Style)

3



REAR SHED EXPANSION
(Universal)

4



SIDE EXPANSION
(Norman Style)

FIG. 41

FRENCH VOCABULARY WITH EMPHASIS ON TECHNICAL TERMS RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY'

Jay Edwards

ABAT-VENT, ABATTRE VENT . To "knock down the wind,', thus, a wind guard.

1. In Normandy: A jamb wall placed inside of the front door of the house, which was traditionally kept open. It functioned to protect the hearth from wind. 2. In Quebec: The upper floor or roof of an out-building which projects forward one to three feet from the wall of the facade. It is ordinarlly not supported with posts. 3. In Louisiana: A "false gallery," also called "hood" or "apron"--an extension added to the exterior of a gallery roof, and often wrapped around the sides of the gallery and sometimes the building itself. Popular in south central Louisiana between Ca. 1870 and 1930. It functioned to protect the woodwork of the gallery from exposure to sun and rain, thus prolonging the life of the gallery.

AIGUILLE. King Post, literally "needle". In old Normandy and Quebec it sometimes penetrated the roof ridge and was decorated as a finial.

AISSELIERS, AISSELLE (also GOUSSET). Haunch. A timber brace, often curved, which supports a horizontal beam, particularly a collar beam. Common in urban buildings (see esseliers).

AIX, AIS. Planks or boards.

ALLONCES. Extra rooms, cabinet rooms. See: enlongments.

APPENTIS. A lean-to shed, added to the ends or rear of colonial buildings. It was employed for storage and servant's quarters.

ARBALéTRIER(E). The truss blade or principal rafter.

ARESEMENT, ASSIETTE. The highest level of the foundation wall. "Twelve feet of aresement.

ARETIER. Ridge rafter of a hip or pavilion roof. From Arête: Angle, line of intersection of two planes. The member supports the corner of the roof.

AUVENT (DE PROTECTION). In France: extension rooflets found on the gabled ends of French timber houses, functioning as weather boards. Petit toit en saillie pour garantir de la pluie.

AVANT-COUVERTURE. In Quebec: Extension of the roof forming a projection extending one to three feet outward from the front and rear walls of the house, particularly on gabled roof houses. Late 18th C.

BARDEAU(X). Shingles, originally about 18" in length and made of oak or cedar. Used occasionally in reference to clapbaords. In rural Louisiana there were few shingled roofs until about 1750. See Merrains.

BARRÉ VOLÉ. In Haiti and other Antillian islands: a Creole term meaning "arrest the thief''. An hedge made of low bushes with thorns.

BARREAUX. Bars or "rabbits." Sticks, trapezoidal in cross section with one dowel shaped end and one sharpened end. Inserted between vertical posts of a timber frame wall for support of the "cats" or loafs of bousillage. It origins are probably to be found in the wattled-walled north European longhouse.

BATIMENTS. Dependency buildings.

BAUGE. In Normandy: a mixture of cobs of clay mixed with cut straw and cow dung [-bouse], applied on a lattice work of oak bars set between the posts of a timber frame building (Brler & Brunet 1982: 239). This technique supplied the basis for Louisiana's bousillage, or mud-walled construction.

BILLES. Blocks of rough-cut timber used for making shingles.

BLOCHET. 1. A sole piece. A short block set between the top of a masonry wall and the wall plate(s). 2. A spur. A short horizontal member set beneath and at right angles to the wall plate, extending inward. It is supported from the wall post by a jambette brace and, in turn, it supports the foot of a cruck, curved upper truss blade or sous-arbalétrier.

BONNE CHARPENTE. "Good construction." In colonial Louisiana this term generally referred to sur solle timber frame construction, rather than en terre, or in-the-ground construction (18th C).

BOUSILLAGE, BOUZILLAGE. From bouse, cow dung, probably via the verb bousiller, to "fill up with mud." In Louisiana: an infill employed in the walls of colombage buildings, called bousillage entre poteaux. It was composed of clay, Spanish moss and lime. It is supported on barreaux, completely filling the spaces between the posts. The specific mixture was an American Indian recipe, but the method was derived from France (see bauge).

BRIQUETTE ENTRE POTEAUX. Brick between posts. Employed on more expensive timber frame houses in New Orleans after 1724, and shortly thereafter in the countryside.

CABANE (CABANNES). In Louisiana: A hut or shack. Less substantial than a frame house. Identical with the Haitian KAY (caille). "Anything from an animal shelter to a makeshift shelter or hut" (Wells 1973: 14).

CABANE DES CHASSEURS. A thatched temporary shed.

CABANE A MAIS. Corn crib.

CABANE A NEGRE. Slave quarter.

CABINET. A small room, usually a store room. In France: Originally an internal room partitioned off from a larger room. In Haiti: A store room. "The larger houses possess an open lateral gallery where the end is sometimes enclosed to form a cabinet or 'soute.' Tools and possessions are kept there" (Metraux 1949-51: 7). In Louisiana: A room added under the gallery, used for storage or servant's quarters. Located on the ends of the rear gallery. Entered from inside the house or from the rear loggia. Originally plank walled, but later incorporated into the framing of the house. Architectonically similar to the gabinete (office, study) of the Spanish Antillian Creole plan.

CARBET. A maroon community. In the Antilles: a community of escaped slaves. These occurred in Guadeloupe and Saint Domingue. Perhaps a principal source for the shotgun house of Louisiana.

CARPENTE. A structure of wood, set on a foundation of wood, stone or brick.

CARRÉ. "Square." The wall frame assemblege of a timber frame building.

CASE. In Haiti and Louisiana: a hut, compartment or small house.

CAVEAU. 1. In Upper Louisiana: a detached cellar. 2. In Quebec, a cellar or basement beneath the house Itself.

CHAMBRE. Bedroom, generalized to any room below the level of the salle.

CHAMBRE D'HORS. An outside room, employed as a garçonierre.

CHANTIGNOLLE. A block of wood, generally triangular or tapered, set upon the back of a truss blade to support a principal purlin, particularly, but not exclusively, when the purlin must be elevated above the level of the truss blade to insure a flat roof surface. Often employed in Medieval France, where major members were often not straight. It is common In Louisiana French roof trusses.

CHAUMIERE. A thatched hut. From CHAUME, thatch. A GERBE DE CHAUME, or bundle of thatch may be applied straight and piqué, or "clamped" or it may be recourbées, or "folded."

CHEVILLES. Nails or wooden pegs, used to secure morticed timbers and also shingles.

CHEVRON. Rafter. When used in combination with a truss blade or "principle rafter," it becomes a light outer rafter, extending from the wall plate to the roof ridge.

CHIMNÉE. Chimney, hearth. In French Canadian houses, the chimney is large and open, like a hood. Cooking was done on the large hearth. This method was dropped in Louisiana, where the inside fireplace was employed almost exclusively for heating.

CLISSAGE. Wattling.

CLOCHET. A brace running from the plate to the collar beam.

CLOISON [cloisson, croizon]. An interior partition or wall of wood or bousillage.

CLOUSA A BARDEAUX, Var. CLOU, CLOUD. Shingle pegs or nails.

CLOMO. A post sunk in the ground.

COCHONNIERE. Pigsty.

CODE NOIR. The Louislana slave code. Adopted in New Orleans, 1724.

COLOMBAGE PIERROTE. A timber frame wall filled with rubble and plaster [lime or mud]. Used in France and occasionally in Upper Louisiana

COMBLE. In France after 1175: Roof assemblage. Timber support system of a roof. Derived from L. cumulus, "surplus." In 13th C. it developed the meaning of a timber structure. A construction surmounting an edifice and intended to support le toit the entire roof. In is composed of arbalétrier, chevron, fâitage, panne, poinçon, sablière, semelle, tirant.

CONCESSION. A land grant authorized by the Company of the Indies or by the Royal Government. These were strictly limited in size in an effort to provide continuous settlement along the rivers. Through much cheating and outright graft by local authorities there resulted strong disparities in the actual sizes of many holdings. Some of the inequities were corrected in the retrocession. See Cruzat (1928), Cruzat & Dart (1927-28)

CONTREFICHE. Brace, raking strut. In Palladian carpentry it extends upward at a 45° angle from the king post to truss blade. Occasionally it may run from collar beam to the truss blade. It is unusual in vernacular carpentry and is generally the mark of a professionally trained carpenter.

CONTREVENT. An external shutter, generally in two leafs, applied to the doors and windows of many Colonial houses. In the first half of the eighteenth century, their tops were generally curved to fit the arched lentel of the door or window.

COTE. Fr. "rib," "side." In Quebec: a section of land or neighborhood, generally running from lower (river front) to upper or from front to back. In Louisiana: "shore," "coast." A section of riverfront, as in the Côte des Allemands ("German Coast") or Côte des Acadians ("Acadian coast"), or even the Côte Hebert (Hebert family coast).

COUP DE MAIN. Cooperative work party from the construction of a house or other structure.

COUREURS DE BOIS. "Woods runners." Canadian trappers and traders who travelled throughout the frontier areas and lived in close association with the Indians. They carried out much of the exploration of the Mississippi Valley after 1680.

COUVERTURE. Roof covering. A roof is couvert with shingles or thatch.

COYAU Also Coyot. Medieval French. A short rafter, mounted to the back of each chevron or main rafter. It supports the queue or "tail" of the roof-the raised extention of a roof near the eaves. This flair originally functioned to cover the exterior of a masonry wall. Later it became purely decorative, particularly on timber frame buildings. In Louisiana this member is employed on the _larmiers (upturned eaves) of large plantation houses such as Parlange. Coyau construction is also employed in the Class IIb Mississippi Valley French Colonial house.

CROIX-DE-SAINT-ANDRE. Scissor braces or crossed braces. In Louisiana trusses, employed between the roof ridge and the king purlin, to stiffen the roof ridge. The Louisiana usage is probably derived from French Canada.

CROIZON. An interior partition of planks or bousillage.

CROUPES. End sheds of a hip roof, as opposed to the versants, or front and rear shed. In the distinctive Norman and Quebec pavilion roof, these are more steeply pitched than the front and rear surfaces. The pitch may exceed 80° in some cases. Pavilion roof croupes are characteristic of certain eighteenth century structures in Louisiana, for example the original St. Gabriel Church in (eastern) Iberville Parish.

CUISINE. In Colonial Louisiana: detached kitchen.

CUISINE D'ÉTÉ. A small room in wood used as a kitchen, usually placed on the gabled end of a house.

DES. Cubical blocks of cedar or cypress, used to support the sill and sleepers in Louisiana timber frame buildings.

ÉCARIE, ÉCARY, ÉCARRIS. Squared.

ÉCHANTIGNOLLE. See Chantignolle.

éCORCE, CORSSE. Bark. Employed for the couverture of early eighteenth century houses in Louisiana.

éCURIE. Stable (for horses).

EMPLACEMENT. A lot on which a house stands. Each emplacement was to be surrounded by a *pileux* fence in the earliest decades of settlement. This was thought to provide a continuous protection against Indian raids.

EN SUITE. In line. The main rooms of the Louisiana Creole house, like those of the longhouse of Normandy, are *en suite*.

ENCEINTE. In Normandy, an enclosure or interior court of a Chateau. In medieval times it was surrounded by high walls and towers. By the end of the fifteenth century It evolved into a formal court (*cour d'honneur*) surrounded on three sides by the main house (*corps de logis*) and by two wings, the fourth side remaining open. The closed court and semi-closed court patterns of certain minor signorial vernacular farm houses of sixteenth century Normandy imitate the more formal pattern of the grand chateaux of this period, for example, Anet.

ENGAGéS. Indentured servants. Many Louisiana peasant settlers arrived as indentured servants, though the debt obligation of most was forgiven before many years.

ENGARD. See Hangard.

ENLONGMENTS. Shed rooms, added to the ends of a house in the early colonial period (See Chap. H, F:g. 20b).

EN PIECE. Horizontal log construction, as in block houses.

ENTOURER, ENTOURéE. 1. To surround, surrounded 2. To wall a house with vertical planks, to "entourage de pieux." 3. To form a wall of posts sunk in the ground, "entourée en poteaux," 4. To encircle with a gallery, "galris de sept pied à l'entoure." [Wells 1973: 16-17].

ENTRE TOISE. Girt, cross brace. Also a small member placed vertically between the king purlin and the roof ridge. Rare in Louislana though it may be seen in the truss of the St. Gabriel Church, Ca. 1769.

ENTRAIT. Tie Beam, extending between wall plates or the tops of wall posts.

ENTRAIT RETROUSSE, PIECE D'ENTRAIT. Collar Beam. In very tall roofs, collar beams may be employed one above the other. In this case the superior member is called a faux entrait, or "false collar. It is unusual in vernacular carpentry.

ESSELIER. A brace which unites the lower portion of the truss blade and the collar beam, stiffening the latter member.

ETABLE. Cow house.

ETRE. In Northeastern France, an extended roof supported by quatre chiffre (figure four) brackets, attached to the long sides or ends of a building to shed water away from the wall surface. In some areas such as Bresse, though not in Normandy, the être has grown into an extended overhang which is used as a shed for protecting farm vehicles and equipment. Structures resembling the être are found on older French buildings around Natchitoches, Louisiana, at Melrose plantation, for example.

LE FAITE FAITAGE. Roofridge. A member which forms the ridge or upper edge of the roof and on which the rafters rest. See Panne Fâitière.

FAUX BOIS. False wood graining, popular in the late 18th and early 19th C. in Louisiana. Cedar or other local woods were painted to resemble birds eye maple, oak, walnut, or other exotic woods, mostly by itenerant decorators.

FAUX MARBRE. False marble graining. Applied to mantle surrounds and base boards of wood.

FERME. Truss. An assemblage of components intended to carry the fâitage [roof ridge], pannes [purlins] and the chevrons [rafters] of a comble [roof assemblage].

FORME. Wall Plate [see sablière].

FOUR A PAIN. Bread oven. Outside ovens in the shape of domes or bee hives were common in Colonial Louisiana. Occasionally they were built into the basement of a raised house.

FOURCHE. Fork or crotch of a tree, used in temporary construction.

FOURNIL. In France: A roof for the oven. In Louisiana: A small utility out-building. Kitchen buildings were detatched from the main house prior to the last third of the nineteenth century In the West Indies and Louisiana.

FOYER. Hearth, generalized to hall (compare Eng. "fire-hall"). In parts of France it retains its ancient name, just as the term hall is still employed for the main room of a house in parts of the English colonial world.

GLATA. In Haiti: A loft, used for sleeping [see grenier].

GALERIE. In 16th C. France: 1. A long room, often open on one side. 2. The porch of a church. 3. In 17th C. French colonial architecture: A porch extending across the gabled end of a house, church, or other building [Seguin 1968: 43-5]. GALERIE LATERALE, later reduced to "Gallery." 4. In 18th C. French Colonial architecture: A porch [piazza], generally running the length of a building, roughly similar to the être of Eastern French farm houses [Bresse], but of separate derivation. The first known citation in Louisiana is in 1704 by Nicholas de la Salle in reference to the full-length porch of a military building constructed at Mobile [Rowland 1929: 18-19].

GARÇONIERRE. In Louisiana: "Young men's bedroom," either in the loft (grenier)of a house, or in a dependency building, set apart from the main house.

GARDE-DE-FOU. "Crazy person's guard." The railing of a gallery [French Settlement].

GAULE. A pole used to clamp or hold a bundle of thatch [gerbe de chaume] on a roof.

LE GRAND DéRANGEMENT. The great deportation of Acadian residents of Nova Scotia in 1755, by the British under Lawrence.

GRANGE. Barn, employed for storage of corn or agricultural produce.

GRENIER. Granery. In Louisiana, this referred to the loft of the small settler's cottage. It was often employed for a bedroom for the young men. The term probably originally implied difficulty of access, i.e., no permanent staircase.

GUETRES. Haiti: Longitudinal braces which triangulate between the ridge pole and the king post [Metraux 1949-51: 8].

HABITANT. One who cultivates the soil.

HABITATION. A concession which is Inhabited. A plantation with a house, unless otherwise specified. The land was measured in arpents of front, the depth being established upon general principals (40 arpents deep, being typical).

HANGARD, ENGARD. In Upper and Lower Louisiana, "Shed." It may not have walls. Some were built with full-length king posts. Often is referred to as a remise in Normandy.

IN-ANTIS. In Classic architecture, the partially surrounded space "between the piers" (of a Greek temple). In reference to Creole vernacular architecture, the loggia, or open space between two cabinet rooms.

JAMBE DE FORCE. Lit. "leg of force." 1. A brace which stiffens the collar beam from the wall post. 2. Less commonly, a lower principal rafter.

JAMBETTE. Lit. "small leg." A stanchion or brace which supports a principal rafter from a tie beam or collar beam. It is usually very short. One of a class of braces called lien.

LA KAY 1 KOUP. Literally, a "sectioned house." In Haiti: a hipped roof house [Maison de quatre eaux].

LA KAY A LO. Literally "long house." In Haiti: a gabled roof house, or maison de diux eaux.

LAMBOURDE. A joist in the floor or ceiling. A horizontal beam running between wall plates. It is often exposed to view from below in the plafond française.

LAITERIE. Milk house. In Quebec: a small room placed on the north side of the house, either internal or external to the main walls.

LARMIER. In Quebec: The upward curve of a roof projection at the eaves extending from the front and rear walls of gabled roof houses of the nineteenth century.

LATTE. Lathing. Thin strips of wood set horizontally on the rafters for the support of thatch, tiles, shingles or corregated iron. The term is also used to refer to floorboards.

LEIUX. "Place," euphemistically and popularly, Latrine, Privy.

LIEN. Tie. A longitudinal brace running from the king post to the ridge.

LUCARNE. Dormer. Characteristic of sixteenth century French architecture, the love of dormers is associated with the Norman roof. The use of sets of small dormers, set low to the eaves, (and sometimes in tiers) was carried to Quebec. Dormers were applied to the roofs of larger plantation houses of Louisiana's vernacular architecture after the middle of the eighteenth century.

MADRIER, MADRILLER [planche de]. Timber. A timber plank, usually thick.

MAGAZIN. Storehouse or storeoom. A room or building built for protection or security.

MAISON A TERRE. Single story house.

MAISON PIECE SUR PIECE. Log house, built of hewn and closely fitted planks. A popular method of construction in 18th C. French Canada and the Mississippi Valley.

MAISON EN BOULINS. In Upper Louislana, an upland South [Anglo] log cabin. The term carries the connotation of imperfect construction.

MERRAINS. Riven shakes or clapboards for roofing. Generally at least a meter long. Split stakes larger than shingles [bardeaux]. This was the second form of roof cover adopted by the early French settlers, following their use of bark sheets. Thatch was not much employed, except on out buildings.

MORTAISES. Mortices. Rectangular holes cut into timbers to receive similarly shaped tenons.

OUVERAGE. The covering of the roof, for example, shingles or thatch.

PALIER. A balcony on stairs which serves as a landing. A doorstep.

LE PANNE[S]. Purlin, arcade plate. Any horizontal member of the roof above the plate. From L. Patena [1170].

PANNE FAITIERE, Panne Faite. Ridge purlin, roof ridge.

PANNEAU. A panel of bousillage between two posts.

PAN DE BOIS. Wooden wall, or sections of a timber frame wall. By extension, timber frame construction in which the exterior wall is divided into panels (or bays) by heavy posts or bents.

PAVILION ROOF. A roof in the form of the that used on the pavilions of seventeenth century chateaux of northern France, i.e., a very steeply pitched hip roof with the side sheds more steeply inclined than the front and rear sheds, and often decorated with finials at the roof crest..

PERCHE. Pole, Used for purlins or lathes of a West Indian thatched roof. Sometimes inserted between wall posts in Upper Louisiana palisade construction (see Chap 11, F#. 42).

PATIN. See Blochet.

PENTE. Slope of a roof. Forte pente: steep pitch (northern France), fiable pente, low pitch (southern France), pente normande: very steep pitch.

PETITS HABITANTS. Small farmers. Their farms extended upriver from New Orleans beginning C. 1720.

PIANO NOBLE. Second level of a multiple story building. In Renaissance Italian town houses, the less formally styled living space of a noble family, situated above the formal ground floor. A term employed generally by professional architects.

PIED DU ROI. The "royal foot." The standard measure of Paris, equivalent to 1.06575 English feet, and employed In New Orleans and vacinity in the period of French soverignty. This was also the official measure of Quebec.

PIERROTAGE. Infill of loose stones, packed between the posts of a carré in colombage pierroté construction.

PIEUX. L. Palus. Picardy and Louisiana: Plank, generally thinner than a madrier. Originally, a straight, rigid piece of wood, with a pointed end for being driven into the ground [i.e., piece of a palisade]. In Louisiana: A stake or picket, but generalized to any medium sized piece of wood. Generally, rough hewn or split or pointed.

PIGEONNIER. Pigeon house. Used on plantations as a source of food.

PIGNON. Gable. Triangle immediately under the end of a roof.

PILIER. Pillar. In Louisiana, piers composed of wooden blocks [des] about 1 foot square, used for supporting houses above the ground.

PLAFOND A LA FRANÇAISE. the French ceiling. A ceiling in which the joists are exposed to view from below In "proper" carpentry the joists were given a decorative bead at the edges. Characteristic of high-style chateaux construction in sixteenth century France, and also employed in Louisiana's vernacular carpentry.

PLANCHE DEBOUT. Upright plank or palisade construction in which heavy planks are set on a sill or in the ground to form a wall. Popular in early 18th C. settlements in Louisiana, gradually growing less popular in competition with timber frame houses. A similar form of construction employing lightweight planks enjoyed a resurgance of popularity for inexpensive housing in the lumber boom of the 1880s.

PLANCHER, PLANCHES. Floor boards, set on joists or sleepers.

PLANCHER D'HAUT. French Canada: ceiling.

POINCON. King post. See aiguille.

POTAGER. Kitchen garden. These were sometimes given a formal layout in early colonial houses in Louisiana.

POTEAU[X]. Post, Stud of a timber frame structure.

POTEAUX EN TERRE. A method of construction in which posts are sunk into the ground to form a wall. Poteaux sur solle. Posts erected on a sill.

POULAILLER. Hen house.

POUTRE (pu:tr). Beam, joist.

POUTRE EN ENTRAIT. Tie beam. This spans the truss at the level of the wall plate. Often in Louisiana carpentry, tie beams and joists are coextensive.

PRIMIER ETAGE. Lit. "First floor." It refers to the first level above the rez-de-chaussée or ground level in French and Colonial French. In Mediterranean fashion, It comprised the living floor for the householder and his family.

PUIT'S D'EAU DOUCE. Sweet water well.

QUATRE [DE] CHIFFRE. In France, a small animal trap made of three pieces of wood in the shape of a number four. In Louisiana and France, by extension, a figure four shaped bracket for support of an abat vent or roof extension.

QUEUE D'AROUNDE. Full dovetail notching. Used to secure the corners of a log house.

QUEUE DE GEAl. In Normandy, a "Jay tail" roof, also called a demi-croupe roof (see Croupe). Characteristic of the end sheds of certain eighteenth century two story Norman long houses and barns. The wide, over-hanging end shed is truncated. Exterior stairways to the second level (grenier) of the structure are set beneath these roofs on one end of the building, generally the south or western end. Nothing of this pattern survived in Louisiana's vernacular architecture.

REX-DE-CHAUSSéE. Lit. "Flush with the street." It refers to the ground floor of a timber frame building which is constructed of brick or masonry. In the West Indies, occasionally used in reference to houses raised on piles or *pilotis.*

RONDIN. Refers to a round post.

SABLIERE [sabli' :r] Wall Plate.

SABLIERE DU CHEVRON. Gallery Plate.

SABLIERE HAUTE. Wall Plate.

SABLIERE BASSE A SOLE. Sill.

SALLE, SALLE COMMUNE. Hall, living room, or all purpose room of the early colonial house. One of the two basic components of the small *salle et chambre,* or hall-and-bedroom house.

LA SALLE A MANGER. Dining room. This sometimes functioned as a family room.

SALLE DE éTé. Service section of the French Canadian house. It combined the functions of an informal Ilving room, a dining room and a kitchen in the early 18th C.

SALON. In more elegant houses, a grand or formal parlor.

SEMELLE [s mel]. Foundation.

SOLAGE [DE PIERRE Also ENSOLAGE, SOUBASSEMENT). Foundation. A lower course of stone which supports the heavy wooden Solle or sill of a timber frame building. It is characteristic of Norman and some Canadian houses. It generally rises .5 to 1.5 meters so above the ground level.

SOLIN*. In France [after 1348]: The space between the joists [solives] to receive infill.

SOLIVES. Ceiling Joists. Small joists are called soliveaux or solivots.

SOLLE, Var. SEULE, SOULE, SOLE. Sill.

SOMMIER. A foundation beam, a principal tie beam. A beam which supports the joists of a loft. This member gave its name to the "Summer Beam" of English and Colonial timber frame houses, such as those of New England.

SOUSFAITE, Var. SOUS-FAITAGE. Lit. "Under the roof ridge." King purlin. Roughly similar to the crown plate or collar purlin of English carpentry. This class of beams runs horizontally, between king posts, about two feet below the roof ridge. It was employed In manorial level buildings in central and western France between the 15th C. and the 17th C. It is also found in the Alpine region and to some degree in southern France. It was used in well-constructed Louisiana Creole houses, churches and public buildings in the 18th C., but seems to have died out by about 1810.

SUR SOLLE. (said of posts) mounted on a sill. A method of timber frame construction which replaced the unsatisfactory poteaux en terre method beginning in the third decade of the 18th C.

TABLETTE. The sill or base of a window

TABLETTE A VAISSELLES. A small shelf of wood for drying dishes extending outside of the kitchen window common to Louisiana and the Antilles.

TAXAMANIS. Spanish shingle (Natchitoches).

TENON (MOUCHE). Tenon.

TETE DE CHIEN. Dog's head notching, (Single?) dovetail notching. Used in joining the ends of horizontal logs at the corners of a cabin. See Queue d'arounde.

TIRANT. In France after 1335, a horizontal member used to support a piece in tension.

TOIT (twa). Roof.

TOITURE. Roof truss. The system of beams which support the armature which supports the *ouvrage* or covering.

TORCHIS. A mortar composed of mud and cut vegetal fiber. It is employed for infill in France.

VACHERIE. Cattle ranch. These were developed by the Creoles and Acadians on the prairies of Louisiana after the middle of the 18th C.

VERSANT. Slope or shed of a roof, particularly the front or rear surfaces of a hip roof. Also called *eaux* (waters). See *croupe*.

VOYAGEURS. Travellers. Used in reference to the Canadian hunters and trappers of the early colonial perlod.

NOTE

1. This lexicon is not authoratitive. The author is not a specialist in French terminology nor has he conducted extensive historical research in Colonial French! The lexicon is merely to be used as a guide to the non-English terms used in this volume. Later research may

demonstrate that some of these terms had additional, or even somewhat different, connotations. The lexicon is included because no appropriate English language resource is currently available. The reader, wishing more extensive information of the architectural terminology of Colonial French is referred to the works of McDermott (1941), Lessard (1972, 1974), and Gauthier-Larouche (1951).

LOUISIANA ACADIAN FURNITURE 1760-1910

Robert E. Smith

In 1880, George Washington Cable wrote that "the Acadian mode of thought is by precedent not by experiment". This important observation is descriptive of many aspects of the Acadian lifestyle in Louisiana but is particularly accurate in describing the expressions of material culture during their first 150 years of Louisiana inhabitance.

Because most Acadians were of this "by precedent" mode, they tended to want their new furniture to be made closely resembling the style and construction of that of their parents and forefathers. Therefore, the body of surviving Louisiana Acadian furniture today provides us with a fairly uniform style to study. By contrast, during this same period of time, other centers of furniture production had evolved through several major and distinct styles of furniture.

The Acadian furniture produced in Louisiana takes on even greater meaning and perspective when we realize it is both a direct link to, as well as a continuation of, the Acadian experience in Canada which is also in itself yet a direct link to as well as a continuation of their forefathers' experience in 17th C. provincial France.

Stylistically speaking, the major influence on Acadian furniture made in Canada as well as in Louisiana is that of the Louis XIII (1610 B - 1643 D) style of provincial France. Only in a culture in which there has been a continuous tradition where thought is "by precedent" could one expect to find a craftsman in Louisiana in 1840 making a table of the Louis XIII style; 200 years too late and halfway around the globe from where the style originated. Important features of the Louis XIII style which describe it as well as carry through to describe Canadian as well as Louisiana Acadian furniture are the following:

1. An overall architectural quality as well as openly expressed structural devices stemming from the fact that furniture was closely related, if not in some cases, an outgrowth of the architectural setting itself. Examples to illustrate these qualities would be the applied architectural cornices of armoires and the heavy mortise and tenon pegged construction of most pieces.
2. Square or rectangular cross-sectioned post or supporting members for case pieces like armoires and tables of all sizes.
3. Sausage turnings for more decorative tables and chairs.
4. Preference for iron as opposed to brass hardware.
5. Squat proportions for most pieces.
6. The use of diamonds as geometric motif.
7. The use of "H" stretchers for stabilization of tables.

Of secondary influence to the Acadian furniture of Canada and Louisiana is the Louis XV (1723 B - 1774 D) style. Salient and characteristic features describing this style found repeated in Canadian and Louisiana expressions are as follows:

1. Cabriole legs and scalloped skirts on armoires.
2. Cartouched or curvalinear profiles for panels on doors of armoires.

Features which seem to have taken on increased popularity during the Canadian experience and were carried through to Louisiana are as follows:

1. The preference for soft woods in general.

2. The use of hard woods for supporting elements in pieces combined with the use of soft woods for wider, two-dimensional elements in the same piece of furniture.
3. Popularity of painted furniture finishes on pieces which is a natural solution to unify pieces made up of two different woods.

Of all surviving examples of Louisiana Acadian furniture, the armoire is the most complex and culturally evocative form of expression--the characteristics vary moderately from example to example, but most would fit the following description: a case piece, closed by two doors of equal size, arranged on the interior with open shelves, the whole being supported approximately 6" off the floor by legs which are continuations of the corner posts which in most examples are square or rectangular in cross-section and occasionally are of a hardwood material, classically squat proportions overall, cypress as the principal wood used, pegged, mortised and tenon construction, iron fiche or butt hinges, escutcheons and lock. Applied moldings for the cornice and in some cases, on the circumference of panels and around the bottom of the skirt and the use of a painted finish.

Surviving Louisiana Acadian chairs, though very similar in most basic features, seem to take on the distinct individuality of each maker more obviously than other forms of furniture. The characteristics which they all seem to have in common are: size (approximately H:34",W:14",D:15"), basic configuration of parts, almost all of which are turned on a lathe, cowhide seats, the use of oak or ash for construction, limited decorative turnings or decorative shaping of back splats, and pegged construction. The quaint individuality of each chairmaker is expressed in the almost signature-like turnings of the finial atop each of the rear posts. Though these finials make up only a small portion of each chair, they have a significant effect on their visual impact. These turned finials and the only slight modification of the size, proportion and shape the other elements give each chairmaker's chair its distinct look and personality.

Surviving beds seem to be the most homogenous category of Louisiana furniture. Almost every example known to this author follows the following description without much deviation. Heavy mortised and tenon pegged construction of cypress, posts of square or rectangular cross-section, raised high off the floor to accommodate the use of a trundle bed (short bed on wheels to be pulled out at night for additional sleeping), mattress supported by planks running side to side, posts drilled to receive poles for supporting a mosquito net.

Surviving tables vary considerably in size and to some degree in configuration and design. The most numerous type surviving would be those which have four corner posts, square in cross-section alongside the skirt and then tapering to a smaller dimension in the leg section as they reach the floor. This common type of table would be of cypress, mortice and tenon, pegged construction with the tongue and groove plank top either nailed on or pegged down. These tables can be found with or without a drawer. More interesting versions of this type of table exist with an "H" "entrejamb" or stretcher stabilizing the four legs. Two additional basic types of tables, though more rare than the above mentioned type, exhibit greater artistic expression as well as more direct stylistic connections to tables in Canada as well as provincial France. The first type has four legs shaped with lambs tongues and chamfering to an octagonal cross-section, or with sausage turnings and an entrejamb or "H" stretcher of matching turnings or a rectangular cross-section. Another distinctive form of table is the chevalet or table on saw horses. This type is composed of a separate loose top made of tongue and groove cypress planks held together on the bottom by batten boards, plus two matched morticed and tenon and pegged four legged "saw horse" type support elements. This table is expressive of the Acadian lifestyle in its most obvious qualities which are mobility and space saving characteristics. It was easy to move outdoors for a boucherie or a family meal as well as it was possible to move it out of the way when not in use in the small confines of the Acadian home. Both of these more interesting types of tables are veritable duplicates of examples made in 18th century Canada and 17th century provincial France, thus illustrating the cultural continuance of the Acadians.

The materials used to make Acadian furniture were largely of native origin. Cypress was by far the favored wood, being not only readily available, but also a material which had woodworking qualities which lent themselves to the Acadian style of furniture making. It worked well into moldings, did not tend to split when nailed or pegged, and in general worked well as a cabinet wood. It in many ways resembles Canadian or French pine and therefore acts to further reinforce a similarity in the furniture in these three locations. Cypress was particularly favored for armoires, tables, beds, and garde mangers.

Ash or oak were the favored woods for chair making. They would turn on a lathe well and also had sufficient strength even when used in the relatively small diameter rungs or thin back splats used in the chair's construction. Ash or oak was used for the vertical supporting posts of some armoires and tables. This use of a stronger hardwood for supports while the rest of the piece is of a soft wood is a classic Canadian characteristic.

In most surviving examples of Acadian furniture which maintain some original surface qualities, there is evidence of original or early painted finishes. The coloration of these finishes seem to be made from fairly common earth pigments. Red or Gros Rouge color, made from iron oxide, was by far the most popular color and ranged in hue from bright barn red to deep red-browns. (Armoires were most commonly painted this red.) Second in popularity was a dark green called "Paris Green", which was made from arsenic. It was not commonly used for armoires but was most often found on chairs and tables. A dark blue called "Prussian Blue" or Blue de Prusse, black made from lamp black, and a mustard yellow made from yellow ochre, though less used than the reds and greens, complete the color pallet in common use by the Louisiana Acadians. White made from white lead was also available and was used full strength or used in combination with the other pigments. In all probability, these pigments were suspended in an oil, probably boiled linseed oil, medium. Today, one can conjecture that painted surfaces were popular for the following reasons: 1) cypress and pine have a showy grain pattern which probably was not attractive to the Acadians, 2) some pieces were made of both cypress and ash or oak, woods of two very different textures and therefore painting would have unified these pieces. 3) in Louis XIII style furniture of France, dark woods like walnut and oak stained dark were favored, and a generally dark appearance is a characteristic of this furniture. The painting of furniture made of light Louisiana woods in dark colors by the Acadians may be another echo of or link to the Louis XIII style of 17th century France.

1589-1661

Le style Louis XIII

Le règne de Louis XIII se déroule entre 1610 et 1649 mais le style auquel il a donné son nom s'étend, en fait, sur une période bien plus longue que celle de son règne: de la mort de Henri III, en 1589, à la prise du pouvoir par Louis XIV, en 1661. C'est une époque remuante, haute en couleur et traversée de courants contradictoires: Richelieu cherche à construire l'État que les grands seigneurs tentent de détruire.

C'est le temps des mousquetaires et du «Discours de la méthode», du «Cid» et de Galilée. Une prodigieuse activité intellectuelle accompagne une inlassable rage de vivre.

La France devient peu à peu la plus grande nation d'Europe mais ce n'est pas elle encore qui donne le ton. Tout au contraire, on voit s'y entrecroiser des influences espagnoles, italiennes, flamandes, qui prennent l'aspect de véritables modes et surgissent et dépérissent avec la même rapidité. Mais, après les ravages des guerres de Religion et le climat d'insécurité dans lequel ils avaient vécu pendant la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle, les Français éprouvent un certain besoin de confort et de stabilité. Ils construisent beaucoup; à Paris, de nombreux hôtels du Marais et ceux de la place des Vosges et de l'Ile-Saint-Louis datent de cette époque; en province, d'innombrables châteaux Louis XIII, aux briques roses et aux fenêtres hautes, remplacent des édifices plus anciens.

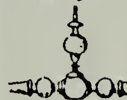
A l'intérieur, les pièces — ce sont encore de grandes salles — se font plus nombreuses et leur distribution se modifie: chambres, antichambres, garde-robes, cabinets se multiplient et sont traités avec plus de raffinement et d'exigence. Pour répondre à ces changements, la fabrication des meubles, des tapisseries, des tissus d'ameublement connaît une demande d'autant plus croissante que le goût de l'époque incline au foisonnement, à la surabondance. L'aménagement d'un palais ou d'un appartement fait rarement appel à un plan réfléchi de décoration intérieure: le mobilier, d'influence cosmopolite, donne une impression assez vive de disparate. Pourtant, peu à peu, un certain nombre de caractères assez nets se dégagent de cette confusion. On commence à attacher plus d'importance aux techniques de fabrication du meuble, à ses formes, à sa commodité. L'invention, l'imagination créatrice s'attachent davantage à la réalisation de nouveaux meubles qu'à leur ornementation, qui devient moins confuse qu'au XVIe siècle.

Lentement, malgré beaucoup de tâtonnements et d'incohérence, on assiste à la naissance d'un véritable style national qui, peu à peu, échappe à la fois aux influences étrangères et à l'improvisation. Du bouillonnement de cette longue période enchevêtrée, un sent bien que va surgir quelque chose dont tous les éléments sont déjà réunis et qui n'attend plus qu'un chef d'orchestre pour révéler sa profonde et inimitable harmonie.

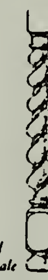
A l'étranger
En Angleterre
le style élisabéthain
En Italie :
le maniérisme
En Espagne :
la fin du siècle d'or

Les meubles

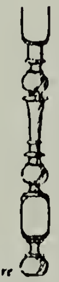
Le tournage



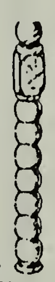
La toupie : c'est un motif très utilisé pour l'ornementation des traverses de table.



Le pied en spirale

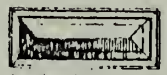


Le pied en balustre

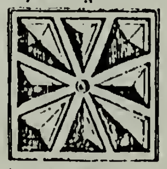


Le pied en chapelet

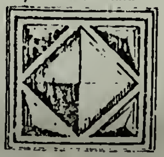
La mouluration



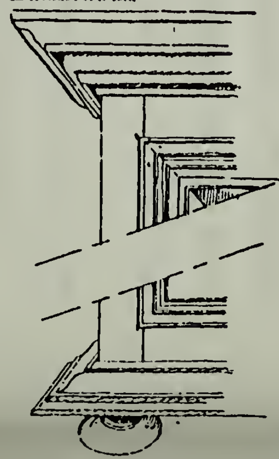
Le tas de sable



La pointe de gâteau



La pointe de diamant



La corniche et le socle

D'une allure géométrique et d'une conception rigoureuse, les meubles de l'époque Louis XIII sont plaqués, tournés, moulurés. Leur forme générale est très architecturée, sobre et souvent massive.

Les matériaux et les techniques. Les bois caractéristiques de l'époque sont le chêne, le noyer, l'ébène, le poirier, le sapin.

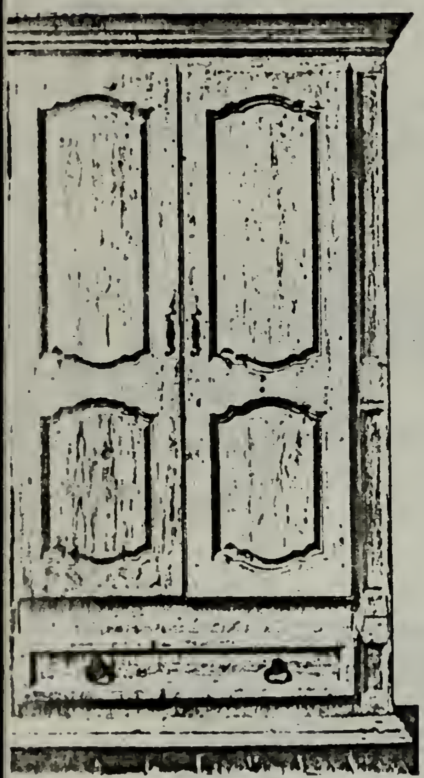
Le placage. L'ébène — ou le poirier noirci pour les meubles ordinaires — sont d'abord utilisés pour le placage, puis s'ajoutent à ces deux bois sombres, l'ivoire, le marbre, les pierres colorées et différents métaux.

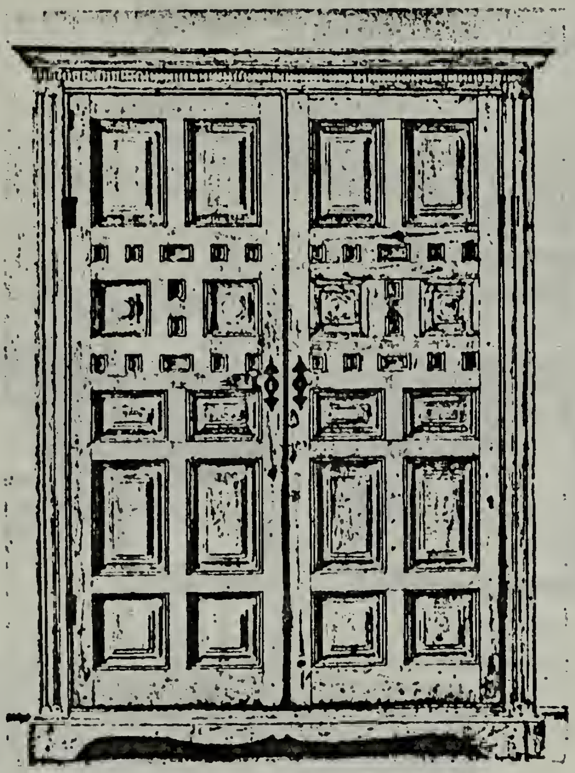
Le tournage s'applique à toutes les parties des sièges, aux entrejambes des tables, des coffres et des cabinets, aux colonnettes des armoires.

Les pieds des sièges et des tables sont tournés dans des pièces de bois à section carrée gardée intacte aux points d'assemblage de la ceinture et des traverses d'entrejambe; parfois les angles en sont abattus.

A noter: parce qu'elles sont plus faciles à exécuter de gauche à droite, les spires tournent presque toujours en ce sens; seuls les meubles de très grande qualité présentent des spires symétriques.

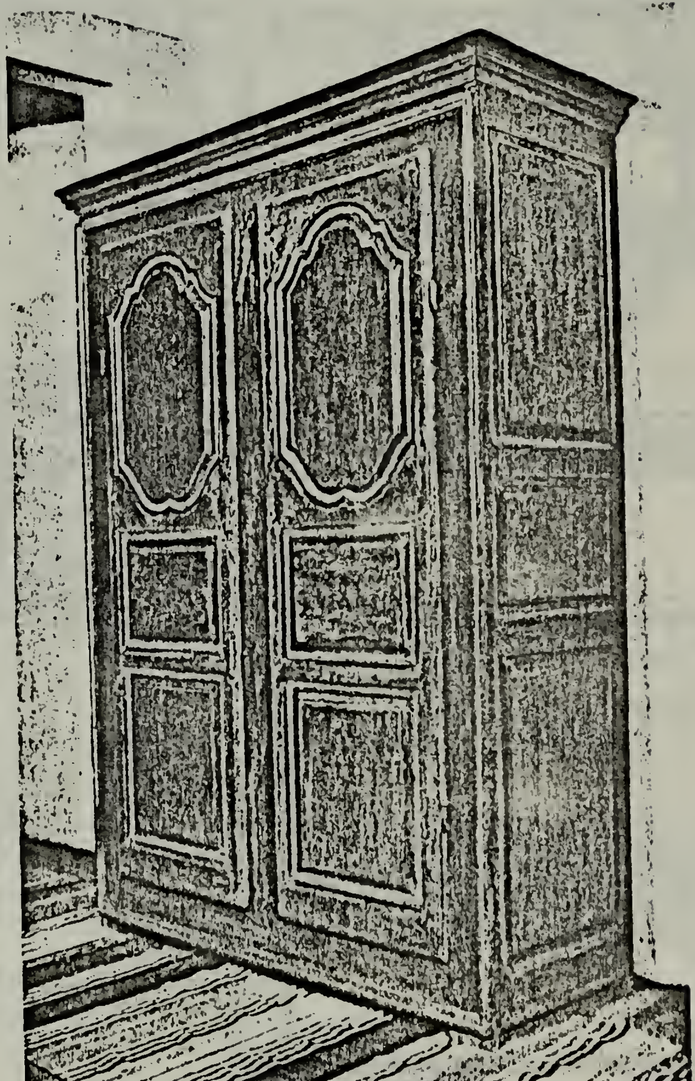
La mouluration est importante; elle encadre généreusement les divisions du meuble : les portes, les panneaux, les tiroirs; elle forme d'importantes corniches et des socles solides; elle s'installe dans le centre des panneaux et forme des subdivisions à forme géométrique.





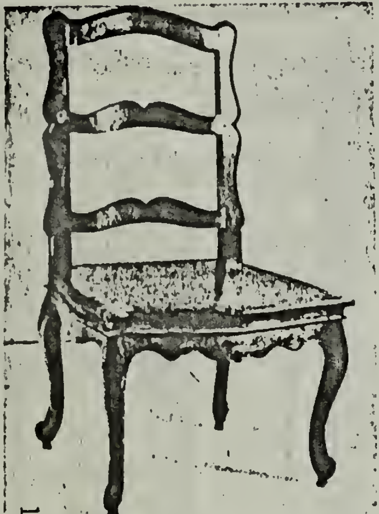
101. ARMOIRE, ORNÉE D'UN TIROIR. D'INSPIRATION LOUIS XV. FIN XVIII^e S.
ARMOIRE, WITH DRAWER, IN THE LOUIS XV MANNER. LATE 18th C.

102. ARMOIRE A MULTIPLES PANNEAUX. XIX^e S.
MULTI-PANELLED ARMOIRE. 19th C.

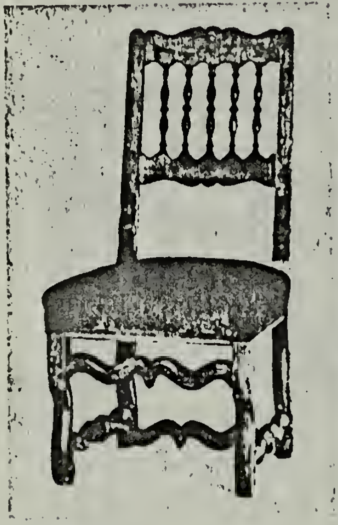


LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ARMOIRE. WITH SHAPED UPPER PANELS. IN ITS ORIGINAL COLOURS.

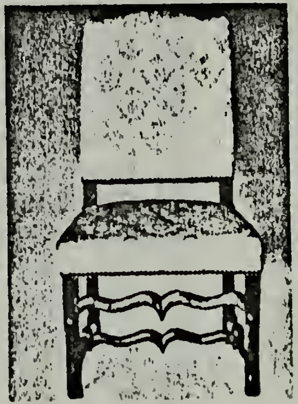
275. CHAISE GALBÉE, D'ESPRIT LOUIS XV, PROVENANT DE BOURG-ROYAL. XVIII° S.
CHAIR, IN THE LOUIS XV MANNER, FROM BOURG-ROYAL. 18th C.

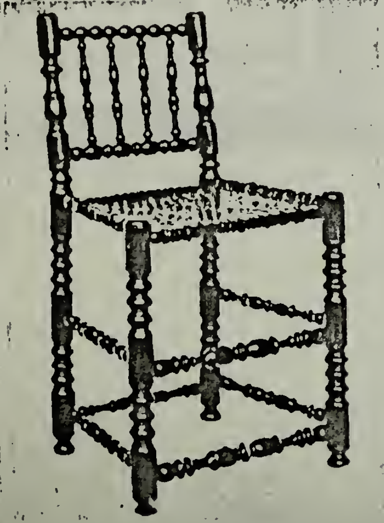


276. CHAISE A PIÈTEMENT « OS DE MOUTON ». XVIII° S.
" OS DE MOUTON " CHAIR. 18th C

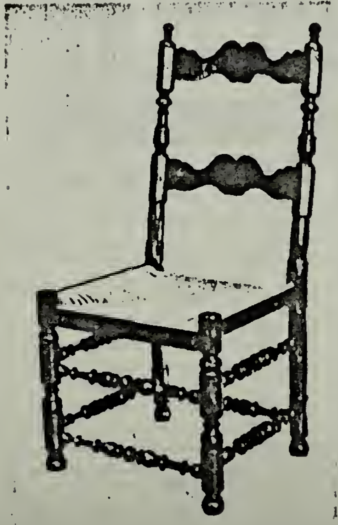


277. CHAISE « OS DE MOUTON ». XVIII° S.
"OS DE MOUTON" CHAIR. 18th C.

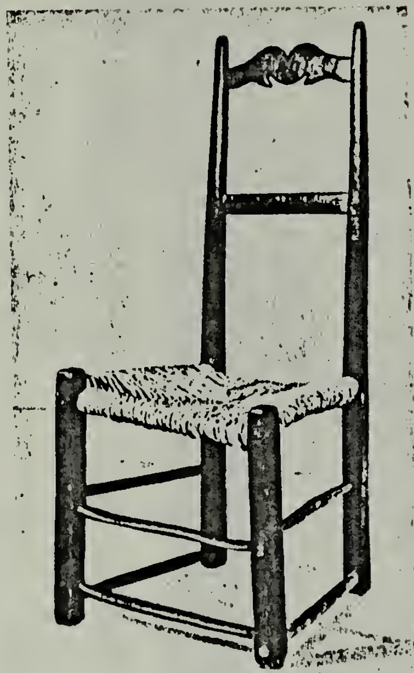




278. CHAISE TOURNÉE, D'INFLUENCE AMÉRICAINE. FIN XVIII° S.
TURNED CHAIR, SHOWING AMERICAN INFLUENCE. LATE 18th C.

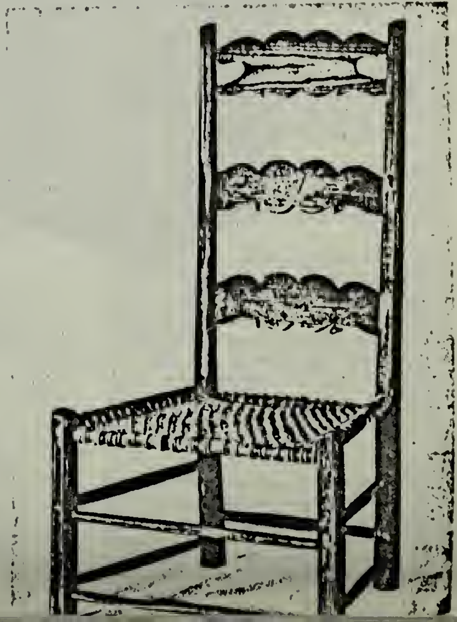


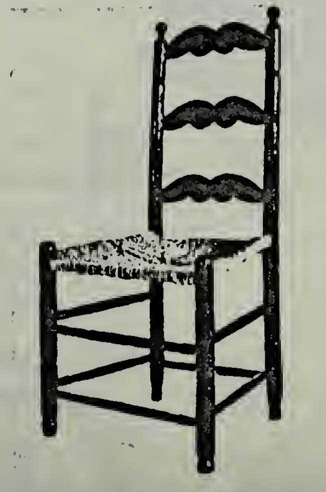
279. CHAISE TOURNÉE, AUX DIVERSES INFLUENCES. FIN XVIII° S.
TURNED CHAIR, SHOWING VARIOUS INFLUENCES. LATE 18th C.



280. CHAISE « A LA CAPUCINE ». FIN XVII° S.
CHAIR " A LA CAPUCINE ". LATE 17th C.

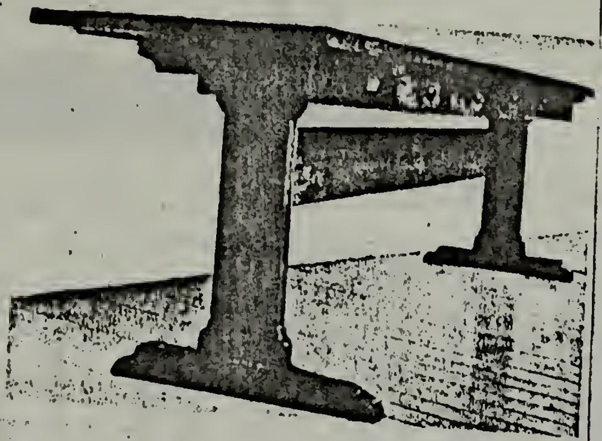
281. CHAISE « A LA CAPUCINE ». FIN XVIII° S.
CHAIR " A LA CAPUCINE ". LATE 18th C.



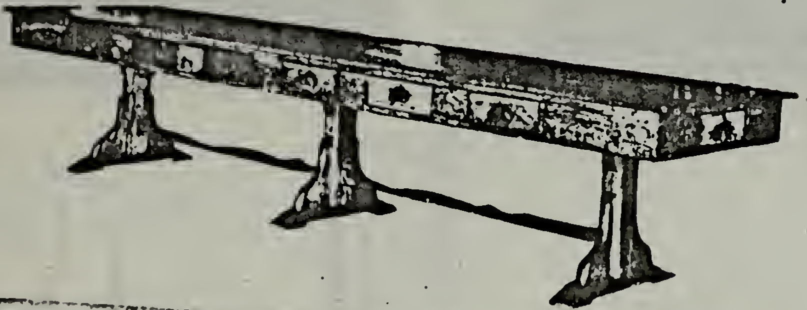


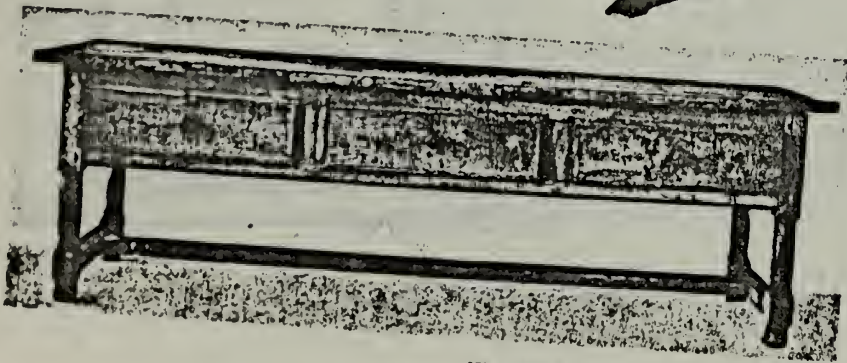
282. CHAISE TOURNÉE « A LA CAPUCINE ». XVIII° S.
TURNED CHAIR " A LA CAPUCINE ". 18th C.

376. TABLE DE RÉFECTOIRE, DES URSULINES DE QUÉBEC. XVIII° S.
REFECTORY TABLE, FROM THE URSULINE CONVENT, QUEBEC. 18th C.



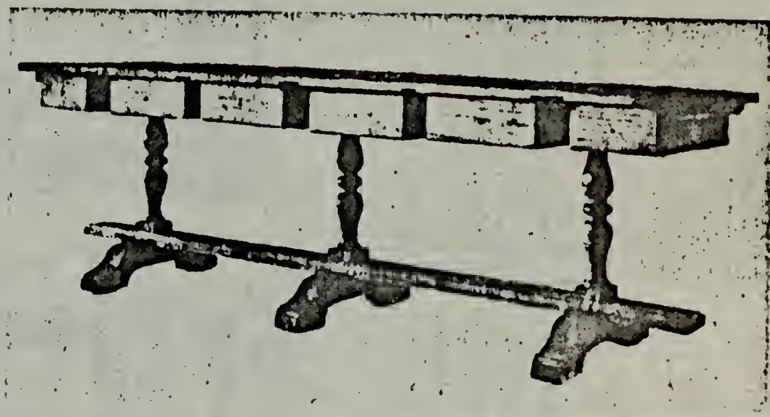
377. TABLE DE RÉFECTOIRE, DES FRÈRES DES ÉCOLES CHRÉTIENNES. XIX° S.
REFECTORY TABLE, FROM THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS. 19th C.



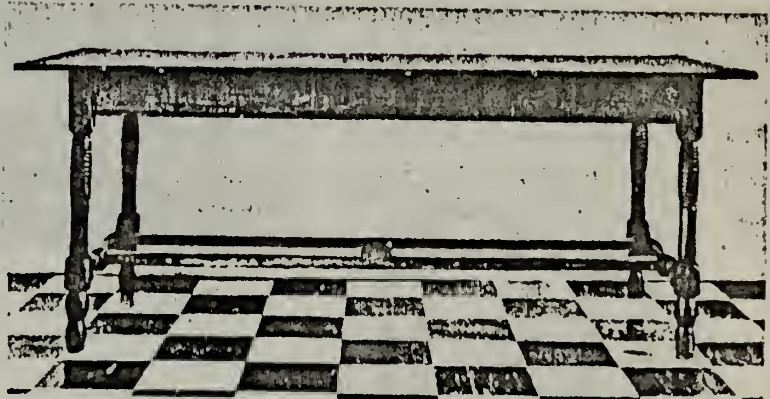


378. TABLE DE CUISINE, DE L'HOTEL-DIEU DE QUÉBEC. FIN XVII° S.
KITCHEN TABLE, FROM THE HOTEL-DIEU, QUEBEC. LATE 17th C.

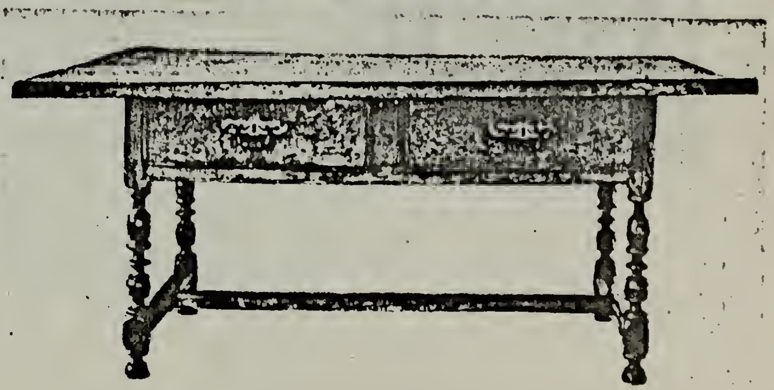
379. TABLE DE RÉFECTOIRE, DE L'HOTEL-DIEU DE QUÉBEC. FIN XVII° S.
REFECTORY TABLE, FROM THE HOTEL-DIEU, QUEBEC. LATE 17th C.

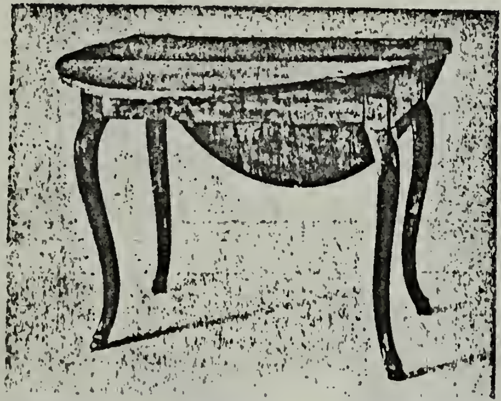


380. TABLE DE RÉFECTOIRE, A PIÈTEMENT TOURNÉ ET A DOUBLES TRAVERSES. FIN XVIII° S.
REFECTORY TABLE, WITH TURNED LEGS AND DOUBLE STRETCHERS. LATE 18th C.

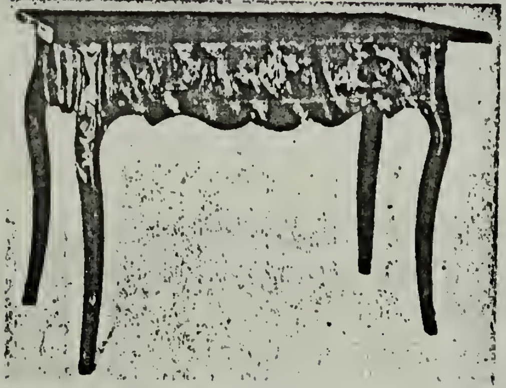


381. TABLE A PIÈTEMENT TOURNÉ, D'INSPIRATION LOUIS XIII. XVIII° S.
TABLE, WITH TURNED LEGS, IN THE LOUIS XIII MANNER. 18th C.

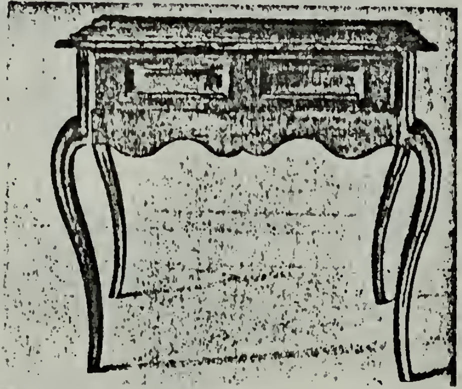




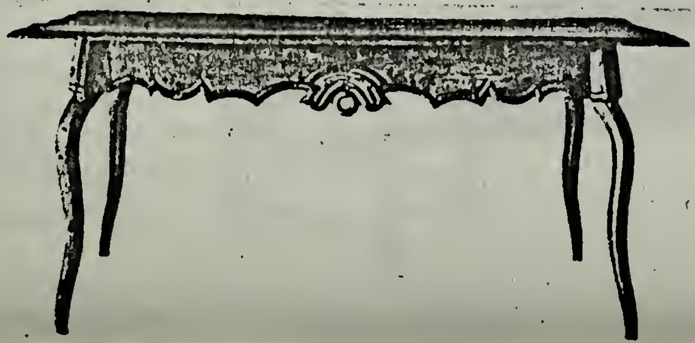
400. TABLE PLIANTE, A PIEDS GALBÉS. FIN XVIII° S.
FOLDING TABLE, WITH CURVED LEGS. LATE 18th C.



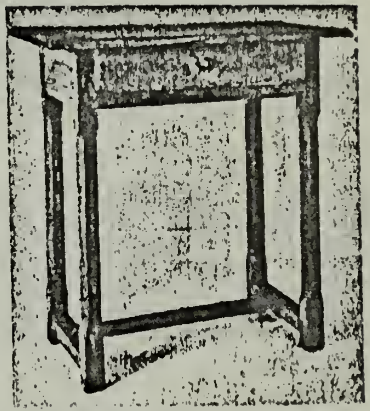
401. TABLE A PIEDS ET A CEINTURE GALBÉS, DE STYLE LOUIS XV. XVIII° S.
TABLE, WITH CURVED AND SHAPED FRIEZE, IN THE LOUIS XV MANNER. 18th C.



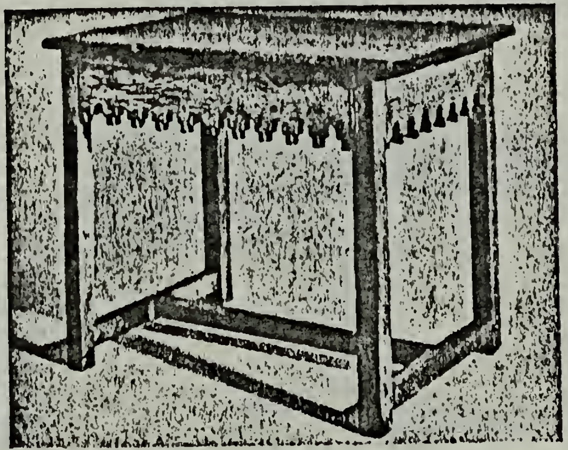
402. TABLE A PIEDS GALBÉS, D'INFLUENCE ANGLAISE. MILIEU XIX° S.
TABLE, WITH CURVED LEGS, SHOWING ENGLISH INFLUENCE. MID 19th C.



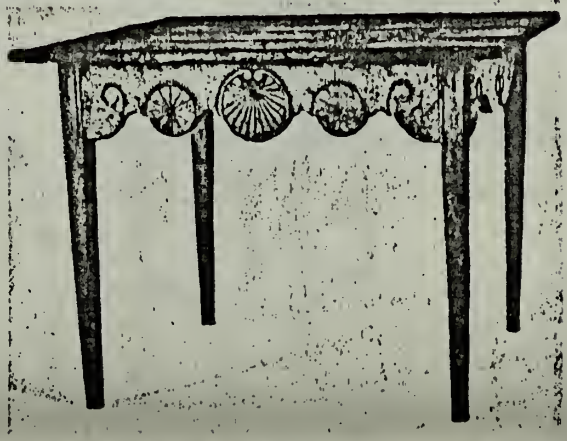
403. GRANDE TABLE RUSTIQUE, A PIEDS GALBÉS. XIX° S.
LARGE RUSTIC TABLE, WITH CURVED LEGS. 19th C.



404. PETITE TABLE A PIEDS CHANFREINÉS ET UN TIROIR. FIN XVIII° S.
SMALL TABLE, WITH A DRAWER AND CHAMFERED LEGS. LATE 18th C.



405. PETITE TABLE RUSTIQUE, A CEINTURE FESTONNÉE. DÉBUT XIX° S.
SMALL RUSTIC TABLE, WITH FESTOONED FRIEZE. EARLY 19th C.



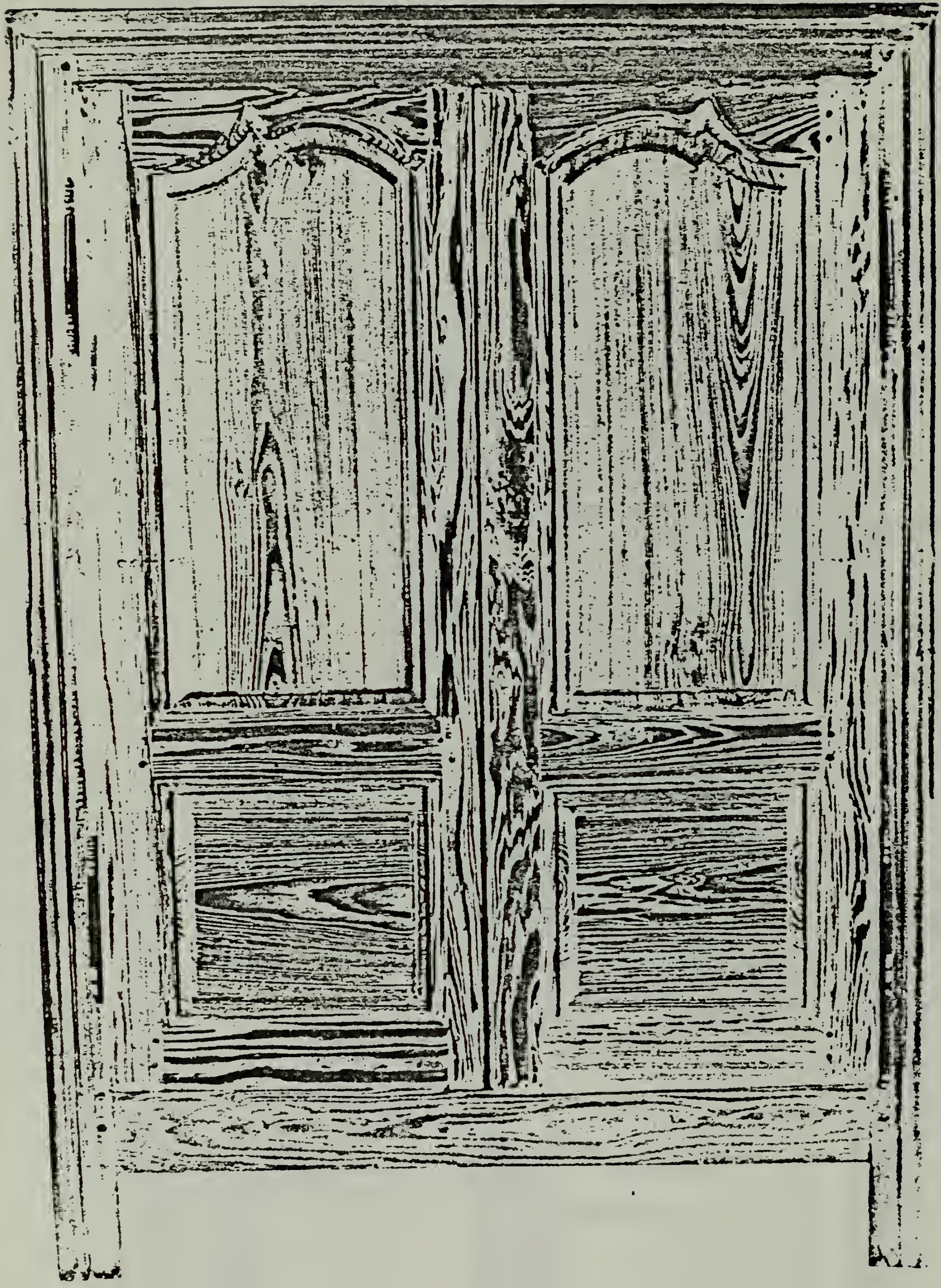
406. PETITE TABLE RUSTIQUE. A DÉCORATION NAÏVE. MILIEU XIX° S.
SMALL RUSTIC TABLE, WITH NAIVE DECORATION. MID 19th C.

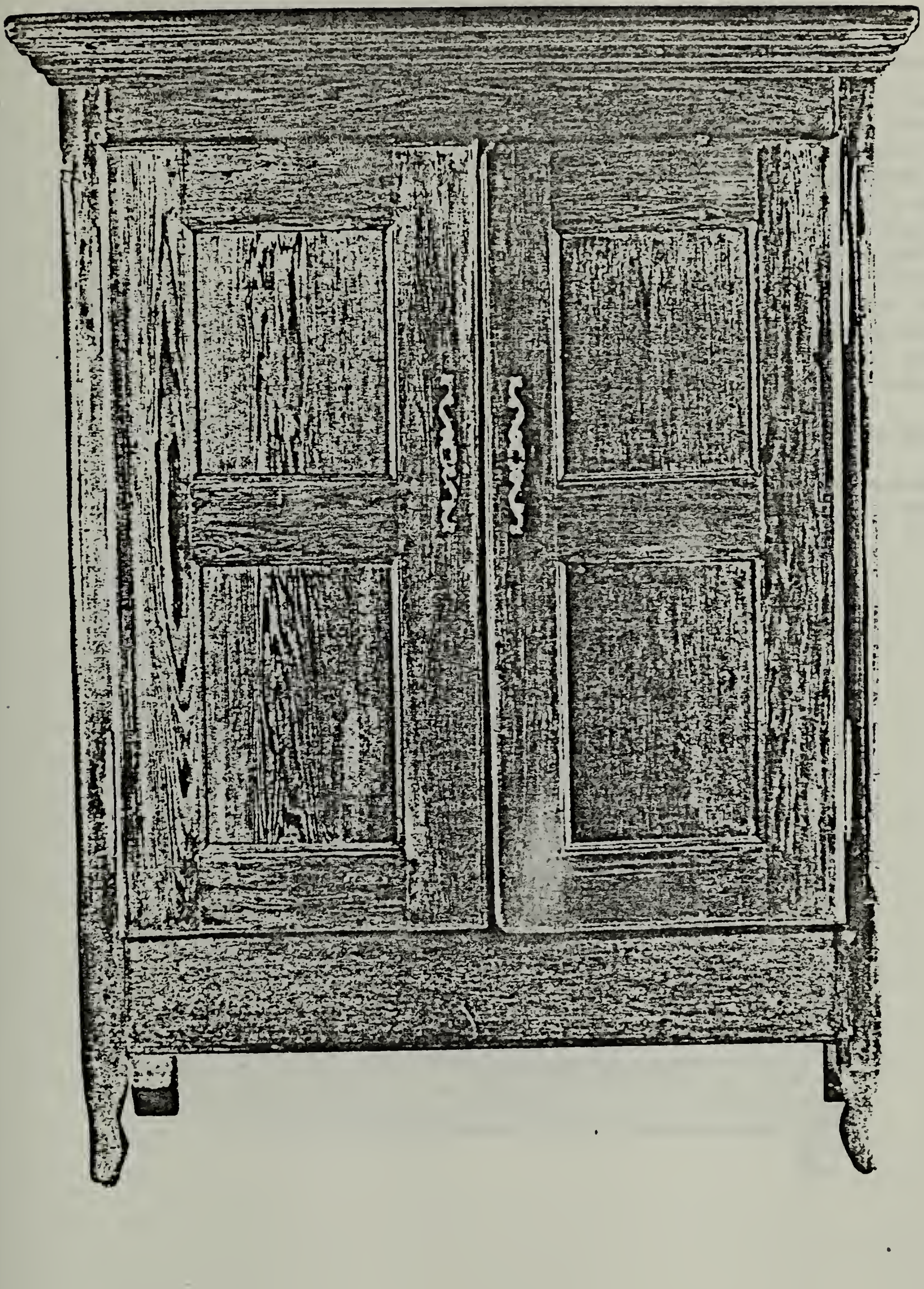
Armoire with shaped panels

Asymmetrically placed curves and counter-curves, in the rococo style of the eighteenth century, are found on the upper panels of the doors of this cypress armoire. The top and bottom rails and side stiles serve as an enframement for the doors. The square feet are extensions of the side stiles. Two rectangular panels on either side. The wood is generously thick throughout. Iron fiche hinges 9″. From Napoleonville, Louisiana.

Height 65¾″, width 45¾″, depth 22″.

Collection: Dr. and Mrs. Jack D. Holden,
Gretna, Louisiana



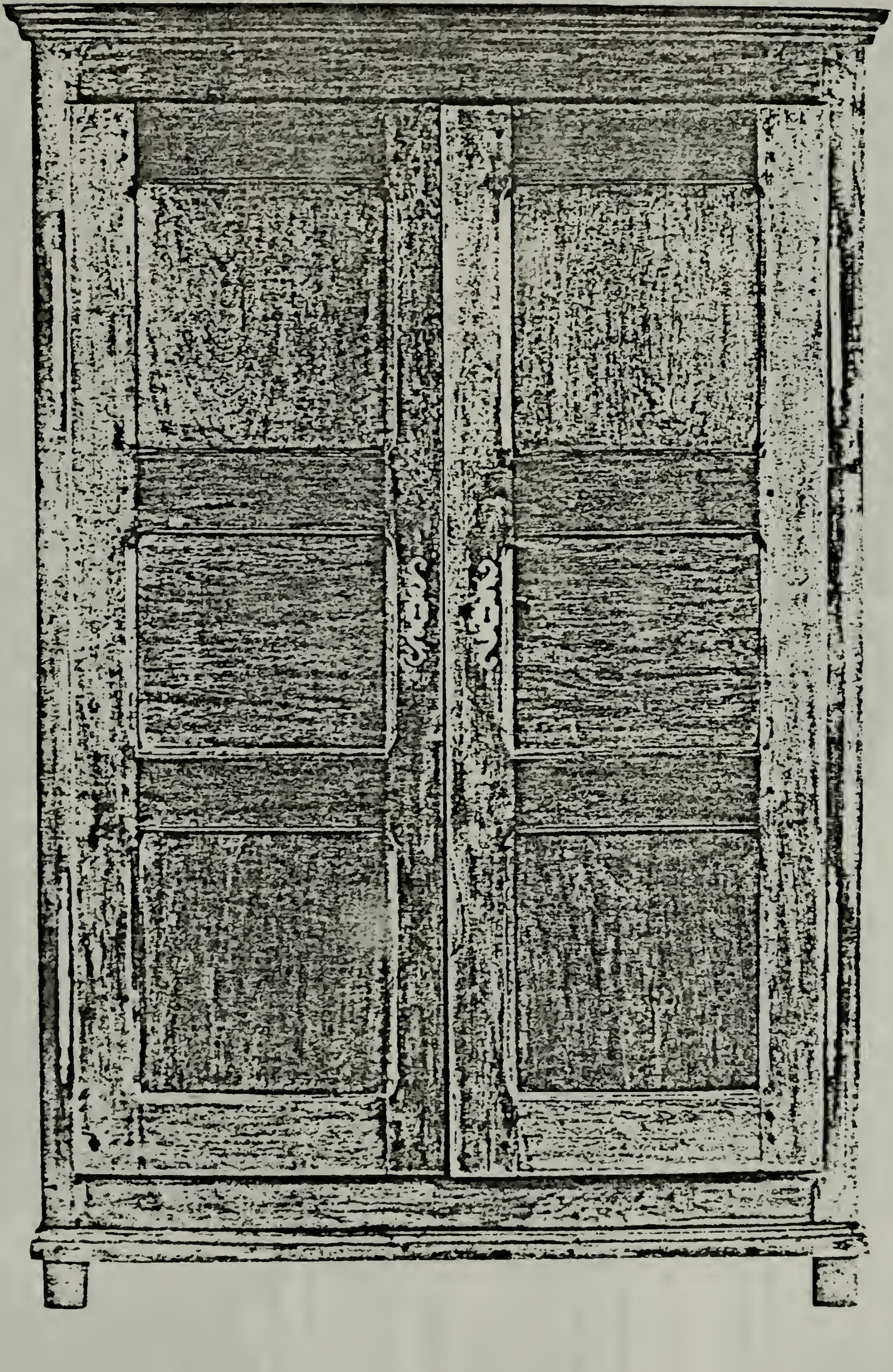


Armoire with rectangular panels

Three recessed panels of slightly different proportions are on each of the doors of this walnut and cypress armoire. There are two square and two oblong panels on each of the sides. The edges of each panel are beaded on top and bottom, and champfered on the sides. The attached moldings at the base and at the top have parallels in Canadian and French examples of the eighteenth century. The straight, square, block feet are continuations of the corner members. Three shelves inside. Brass fiche hinges 10¼″. One escutcheon is replacement.

Height 68″, width 41½″, depth 18¼″.

Collection: Mr. Thomas Edward Smith,
Hammond, Louisiana



Old Vermilion Hotel
Lafayette, La.

RIGHT, TOP—Cypress table with white oak Sheraton style legs. Found in Acadiana, it is a country copy of the Louisiana Creole style. Circa: 1820-1840.

Dimensions: 53" x 33" x 28"

Collection: Derrik Charbonnet Holden — Baton Rouge, Louisiana

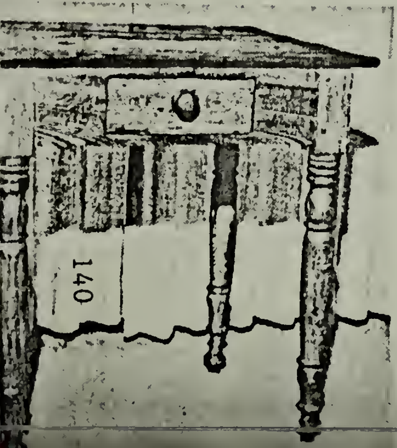
RIGHT—CENTER—H-Stretcher table of cypress with cherry legs. Remnants of brun d'espagnol remain. Hard wood used for supporting structures was common in the Acadian country. Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana for January, 1731, include an agreement that Jean Nantier made for constructing six walnut tables, turned on lathe. This table is of a style commonly associated with the early 18th century but probably represents a late survival of the Louis XIII style.

Dimensions: 64" x 37-1/2" x 30"

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. James Bourg

RIGHT, BOTTOM—This cypress H-stretcher table features dove tail construction. Tables of this type were probably made from the early days of the colony well into the 19th century. A similar table with 1840 terminus post quem tool marks exists. This piece was found in Acadian Louisiana.

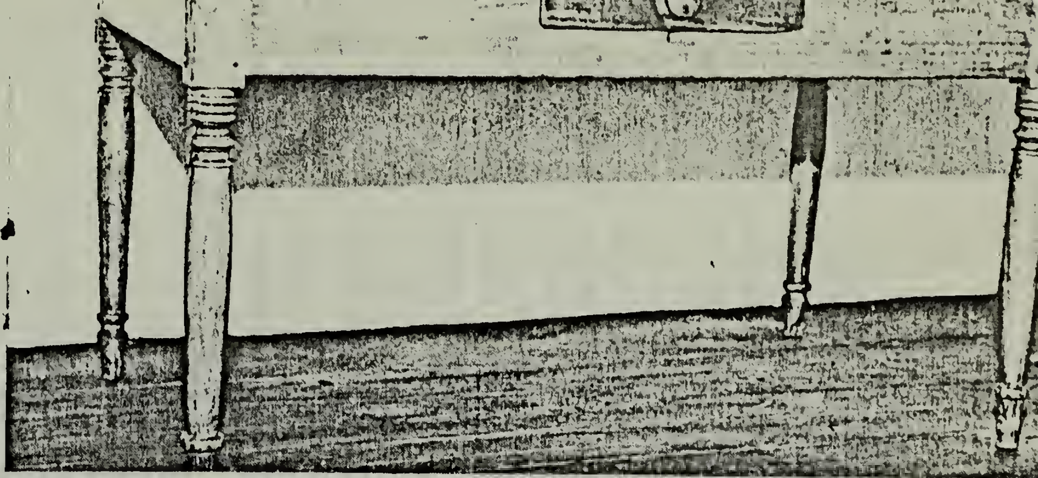
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Sonny Bernard — Breaux Bridge, Louisiana

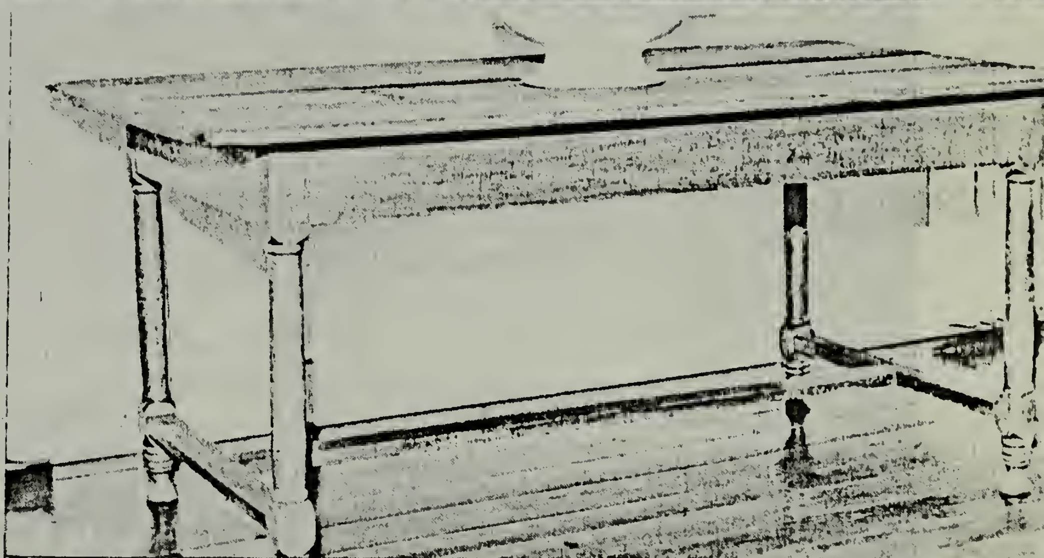


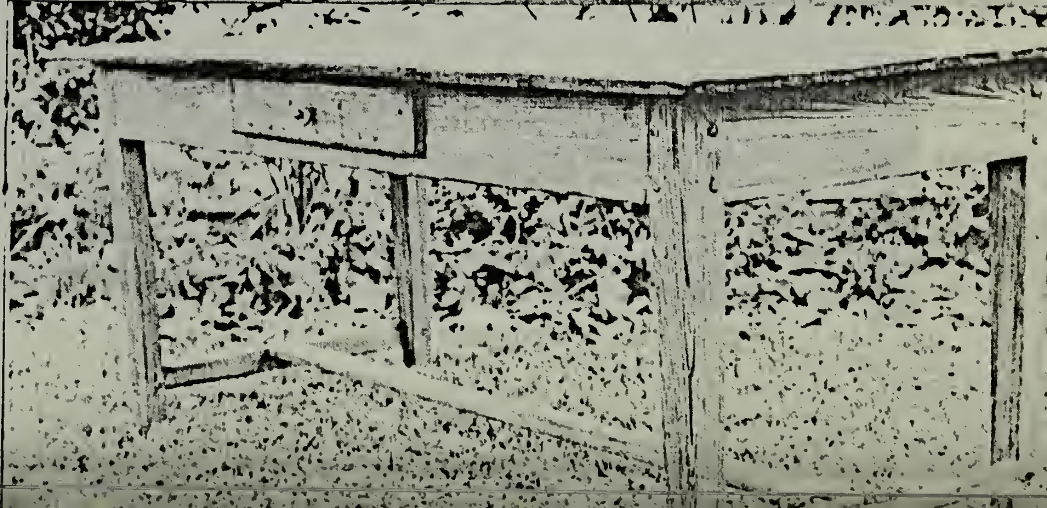
LEFT—This cypress table with Sheraton legs was found in Acadiana. It is a country copy of Louisiana Creole style. Circa: 1810-1840.

Dimensions: 28" x 23-1/4" x 29"

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. James Bourg
Lafayette, Louisiana



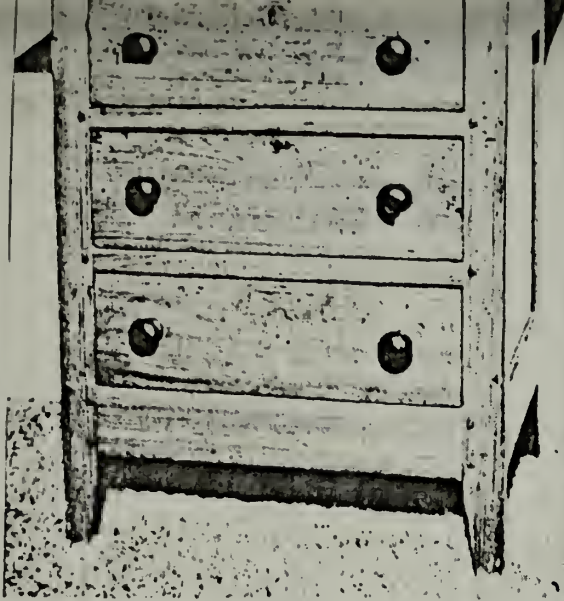


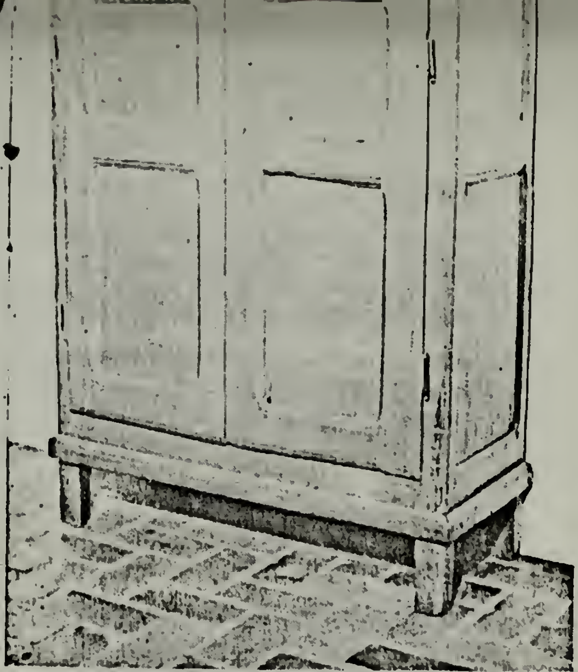


found in Lafayette. Circa, late 18th century.

Dimensions: 49-1/4" x 38-1/2" x 13-1/2"

Collection: Derrik Charbonnet Holden





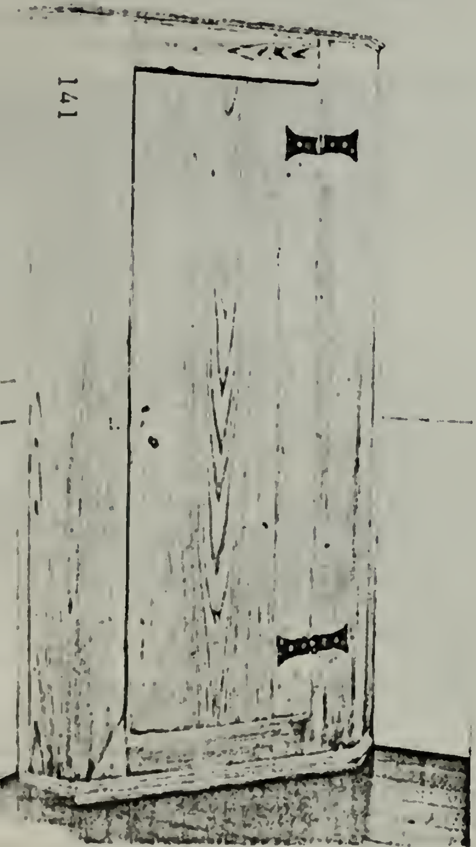
Cypress Acadian style armoire with the squat proportions, use of soft woods and iron trimmings commonly found in Canadian furniture. This armoire possibly dates prior to 1750; and it was found in Cloutierville.

Collection: Mrs. Mildred McCoy
Cloutierville, La.

Cypress Acadian style chest-of-drawers found in South Louisiana. Chests-of-drawers are the rarest pieces of Louisiana furniture and are not common in the early inventories, indicating that armoires were more popular as storage pieces. First quarter of 19th century.

Dimensions: 38" x 14" x 64-1/2"

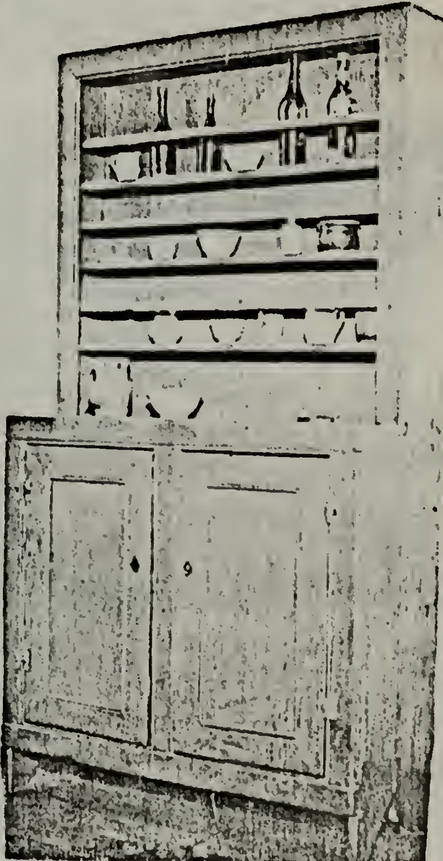
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Deshotel
Lafayette, Louisiana



Hanging corner cupboard of cypress. Remnants of verdegris remain.

Dimensions: 76" x 50" x 22"

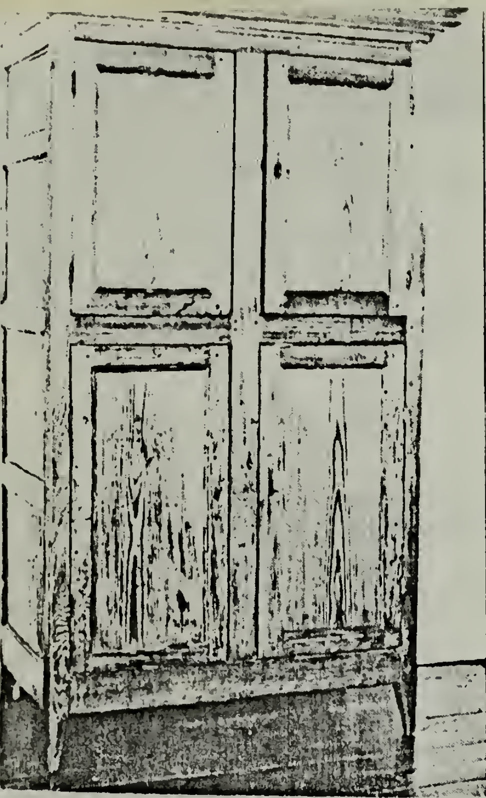
Collection: Derrik Charbonnet Holden



Acadian style vaisselier of cypress. It was found in Acadian Louisiana. Circa, early 19th century.

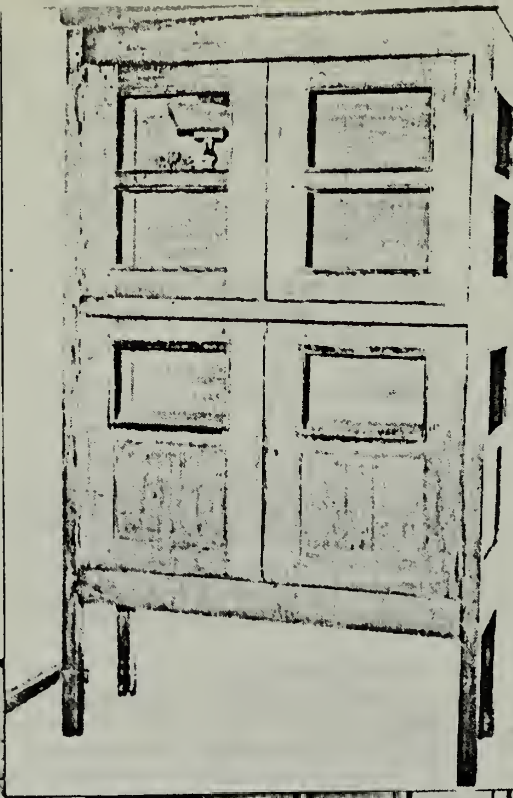
Dimensions: 81" x 46" x 17"

Collection: Derrik Charbonnet Holden
Baton Rouge, La.



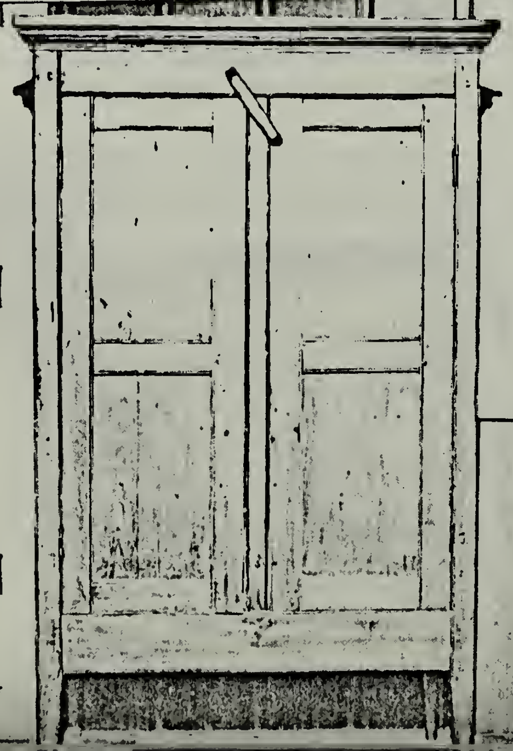
Louisiana Acadian style cupboard of cypress, circa first quarter of 19th century.

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. James Bourg



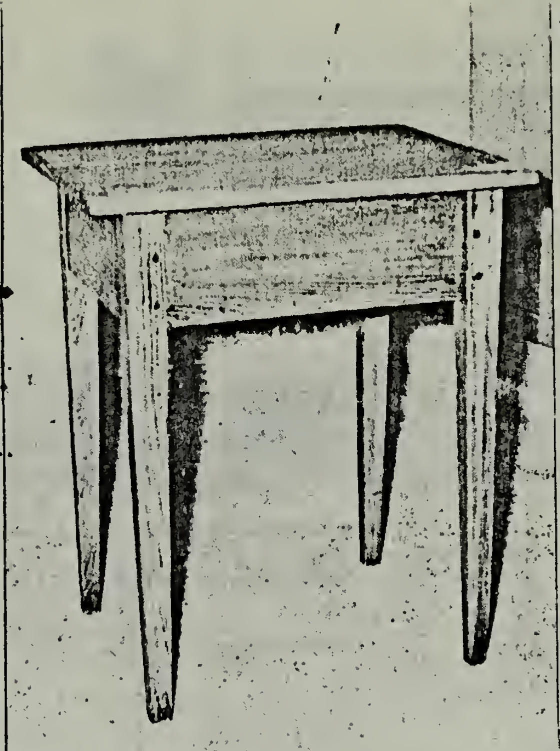
Garde Manger of walnut with cypress as a secondary wood. This Louisiana creole style piece is from the first quarter of the 19th century. Found in Baton Rouge.

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. John A. Cress



Cypress Acadian style armoire with attached cornice. The attached cornice is characteristic of Acadiana. Traces of the original brun d'espagnol paint remain. Possibly built as early as 1790, it was found in South Louisiana.

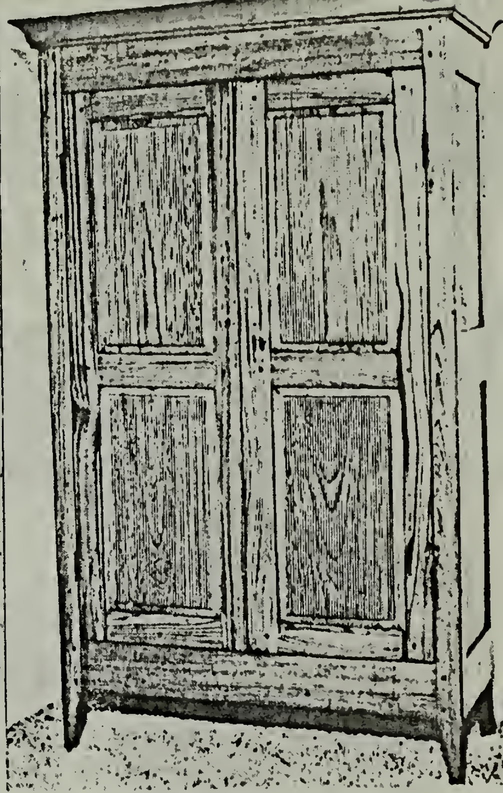
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. L. T.
Bernard
Breaux Bridge, La.



Classic Acadian style table of cypress with tapered legs. The name, LaCours, appears on the skirt and may represent the cabinet maker. A LaCoeur was listed as a cabinetmaker from Paris who was killed in the Natchez Rebellion, and the table maker may be a descendant. This style is the most common survivor of the early tables. Found in New Orleans. Circa, 19th century.

Dimensions: 19" x 24-1/2" x 28"

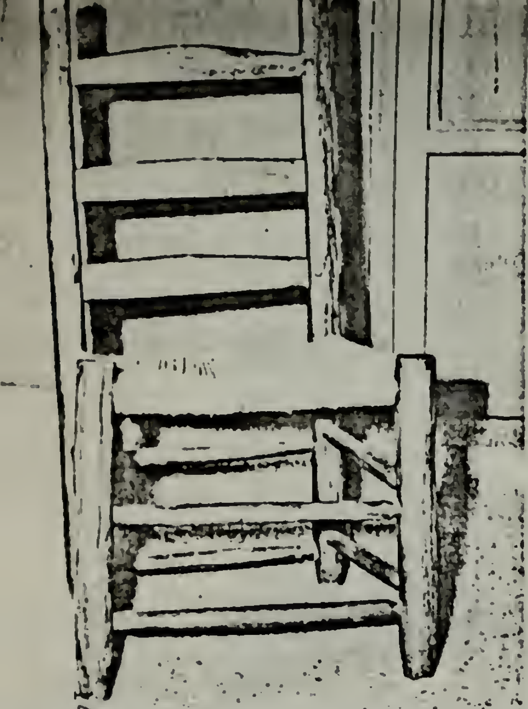
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Coerte Voorhies, Jr.



Tapered leg, Acadian style armoire with reeded doors. Palardy in his book illustrates a reeded armoire rustique (Figure 51). Found in Acadiana, it was built in the first quarter 19th century.

Dimensions: 29-1/2" x 23-3/4" x 34"

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. A. C.
Deshotel
Lafayette, Louisiana



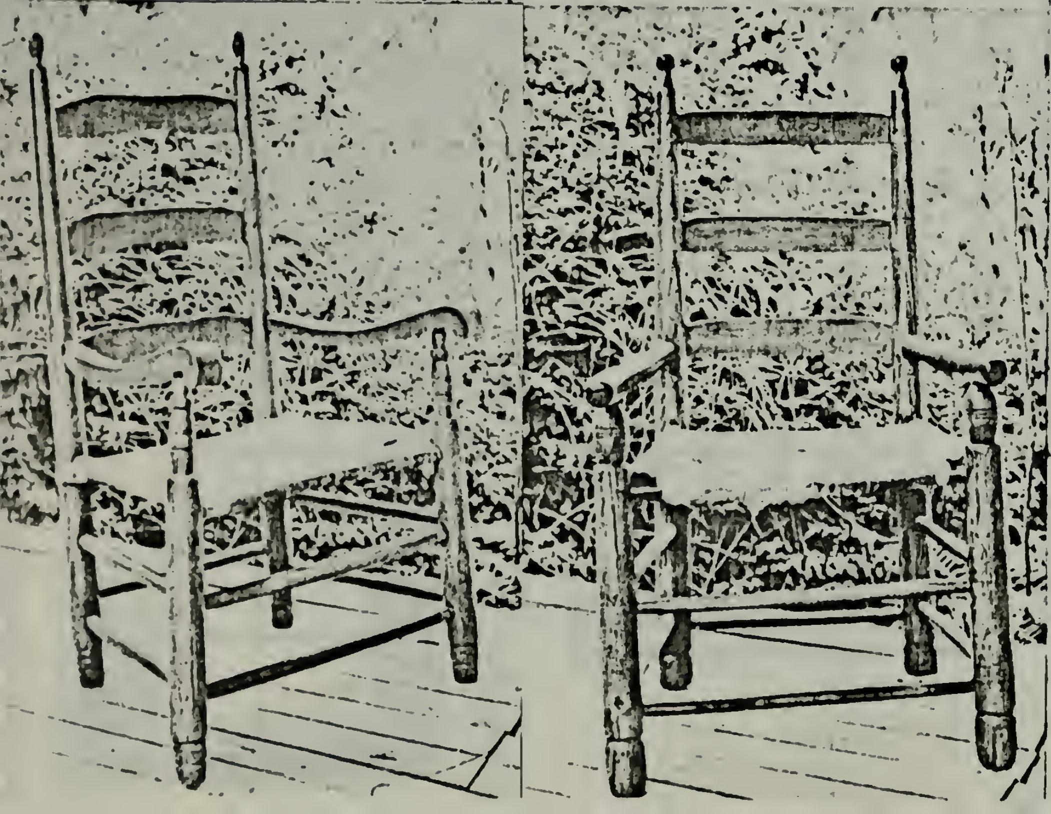
Louisiana Acadian style chair of hickory.

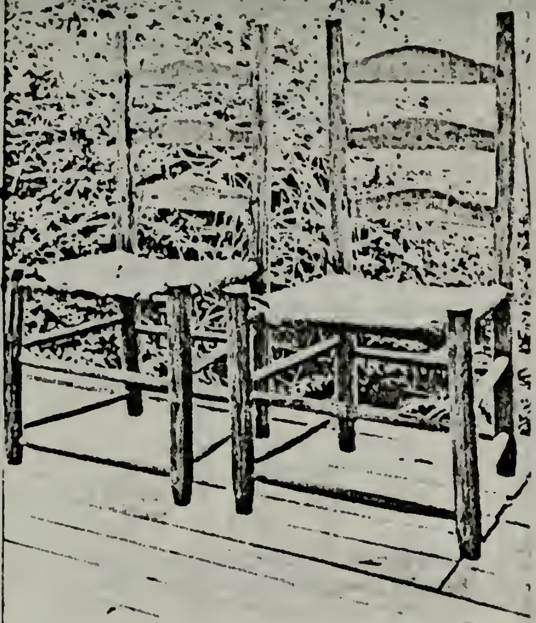
Dimensions: 29" back, 12" high seat, seat is 13" x 13"

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Coerte A. Voorhies, Jr.
New Orleans, La.

Two Acadian style armchairs. Mixed woods. Nineteenth century. Found in Acadiana.

Collection: Robert Smith
Broussard, Louisiana





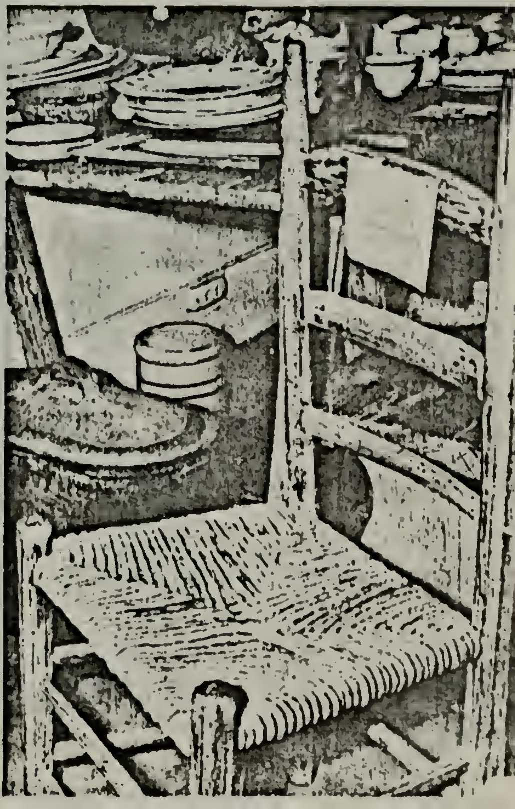
Acadian Museum
St. Martinville, La.

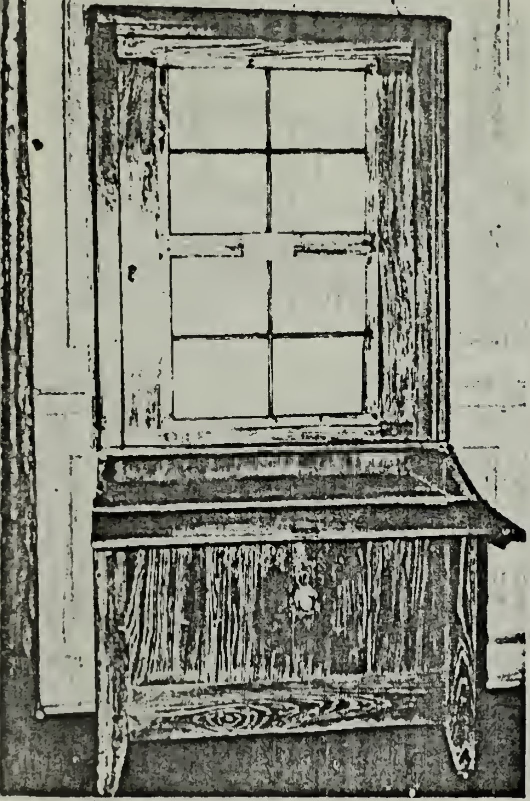
These Acadian style chairs of oak of the "white" group were found in Acadiana. Circa: 18th to early 19th century.

Collection: Robert Smith
Broussard, Louisiana

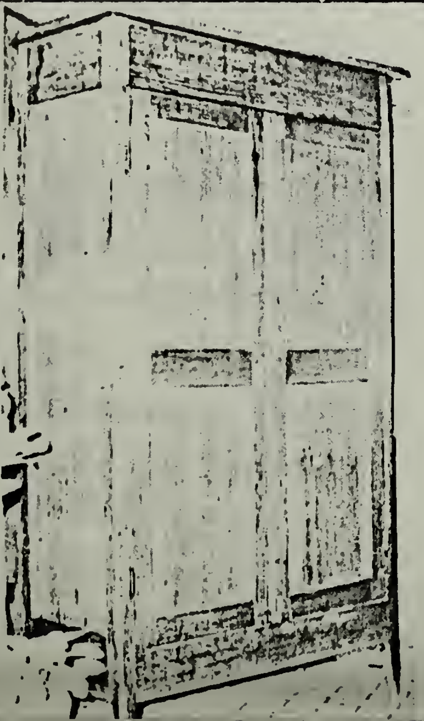
Corn shuck seat in Acadian style chair. Circa: 18th - 19th century. Mixed woods. Found in the Cane River area.

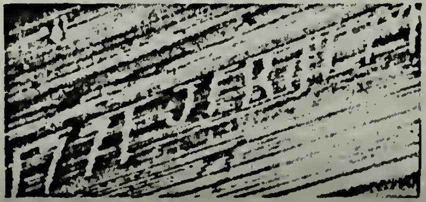
Collection: Mrs. Mildred McCoy
Cloutierville, La.





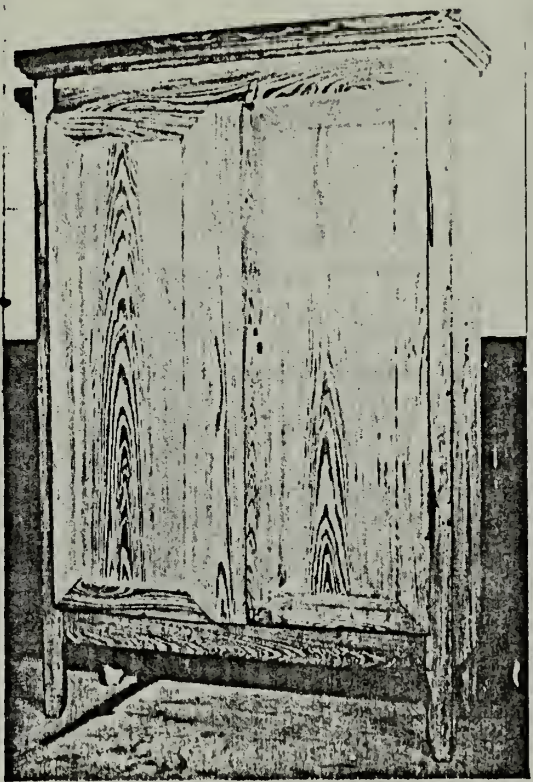
This cypress desk was built for Sister Philippine Duchesne, who was the founder of the Sacred Heart Academy at Grand Coteau. She was said to have used it from 1821-1830. A native of France this courageous nun came to the South Louisiana wilderness from the Sacred Heart convent in St. Louis, Missouri.

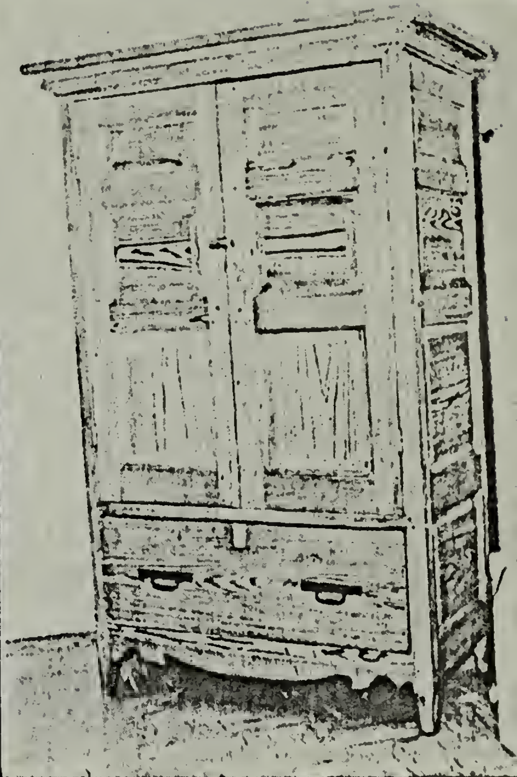




Acadian style cypress armoire marked with the date, 1771. Some of the tapered leg pieces are probably earlier than previously supposed.

Collection: Mrs. Roy Merrill





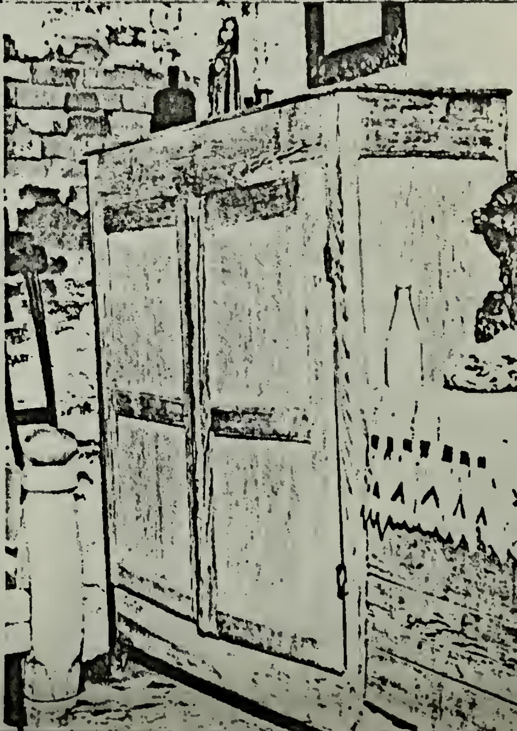
Classic Acadian style armoire of cypress with remnants of brun d'espagnol. Circa, first quarter of 19th century.

Collection: Mrs. David Elroy Citron, Jr.

Louisiana Acadian style armoire of cypress with the unusual feature of a drawer at the bottom. Found in Church Point. Late 18th century.

Dimensions: 64" x 39-1/2" x 20"

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hanley, Sr.



Cypress Acadian style armoire with iron fische hinges and characteristic squat proportions. Circa: mid 18th century.

Collection: Acadian Museum in Evangeline Park
St. Martinville, La.

ACADIAN FURNISHINGS

HOME CRAFTS AND MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

Robert E. Smith

Because the "Acadian mode of thought was by precedent not by experiment" and because the Acadians were largely self-sufficient when it came to supplying their own basic daily needs, one finds their home crafts provide possibly the best and surely the purest example of continuous cultural linkage of the late 18th and 19th century Acadians of Louisiana with the 18th century Acadians of Canada and on to their 17th century ancestors in provincial France. These crafts retained amazing continuity, seeming not to change from generation to generation and did not submit to the powerful forces of acculturation such as the changes in climate, materials available, or exposure to other diverse cultural backgrounds. The purity and continuity of the Acadian home crafts is most vividly exemplified by their homespun and woven fabrics. It is possible to place a bedspread known to be of early 20th century Louisiana manufacture next to one of 18th century Canadian manufacture next to one of 17th century French manufacture and it would be virtually impossible to distinguish any stylistic distinctions from one to the next. Their almost unbelievable purity of creative tradition becomes more amazing when appreciated in comparisons to other important cultural expressions like cuisine, music, and architecture, all of which show the prominent effects of the acculturation process being modified in Louisiana by the local climate, materials available, as well as exposure to other cultures.

Like the fabrics themselves, the clothes made with them by the Louisiana Acadians seemed to maintain a purity of style relating back to the 18th century Canada and on to 17th century provincial France. Considering the differences in the climates of these countries, their continuity would seem most unlikely.

Other material links with Canada and on to France in the average household of a late 18th century Louisiana Acadian were the cooking utensils, as well as the eating and serving pieces used for food. These metal, glass and pottery items would have been made in factories in France and exported for use in both French colonies: Canada and Louisiana.

In his Voyage to Louisiana 1803-1805, C. C. Robin observed that the Acadians "spin cotton into thread of which they made coarse muslin shirts, fine cloth, mosquito nets, and that multi-colored striped cotton so agreeable to the eye resembling very much our siamoises out of which they make skirts and blouses and for men's pants and jackets". Although officialFrench and Spanish law prohibited weaving in the colonies to encourage imports from the homelands, it is evident from the Robin account and others that spinning and weaving continued to be practiced by the Acadians in the rural areas. Other than the cultural predisposition for repeating past styles, several basic factors involved with the actual production of the cloth limited in some ways and contributed to it in other aspects of its design.

First of all was the limited material available to spin; this being cotton, wool and some linen. These were limited in color compared to other weaving cultures of the same period. Cotton was used in its natural white or yellow-brown state, or altered by the use of indigo (blue) or walnut (brown) dyes. Wood was used in its natural white (cream) or black (brown) state. Surviving linen homespun cloth collected locally is very rare, but it is probable that it was used in its natural color as well as dyed with indigo.

The loom itself was also a limiting factor in the production of the Acadian fabrics because of its maximum weaving width of from only 42 to 46 inches and its two shaft arrangement for manipulating the warp threads. The surviving looms themselves are generally very similar in overall construction, being of cypress, ash, or pine, heavy mortise, tenon and pegged construction. The two types of looms are different not in how their working parts operate, but only in the way these mechanisms are supported. One type has four tall corner posts of equal height and the other has usually only two tall corner posts on the front with a cantilevered and braced pair of supports attached to them. Both these types of looms are closely related to extant 18th century looms in Canada and also those seen in Denis Diderot's mid18th century encyclopedia fully documenting weaving in France to that period. In contrast to the strict adherence of the Louisiana Acadians to traditional styles, patterns and even loom construction, in Canada, Acadian weaving seems to have "progressed" and acculturated in the 19th century, absorbing in particular Anglo-Saxon weaving traditions and styles as well as the adoption of multiple shaft or harness looms capable of weaving complex patterns and textures of fabrics.

Because of the loom limitations discussed above, four main categories of fabrics were possible. These are the solid, the stripe, the complex warp and the boutonné' types. Solid fabrics survive in a full range of weights from the finest cotonade used for sheets and clothing all the way up to the heaviest blankets which approach 1/4 inch in thickness. Solidsusually have white cotton warp threads because the short staple of yellow cotton made it a poor choice for warp threads which needed to be both small in diameter and possess good tensile strength. Striping was most commonly produced by crossing solid warp (usually white) with alternating bands of two or three different colors of equally weighted weft threads.

Another type of striping was produced by crossing a solid warp with different weights of white weft threads to produce a textural striping, most popular for coverlets. These Louisiana Acadian textured strip or cordon coverlets are identical to the couvertures de mariage of French Canada. Worn-out articles of machine made cloth were torn into thin strips and woven into striped patterns also, enlarging the color palette of Acadian weaving and relating directly again to similar coverlets of Canadian manufacture called catalogne. The stripe category is where the Acadian weavers seem to have enjoyed their creativity the most, producing a seemingly endless number of sensitively composed variations on a fairly limited theme. In the striping it seems that numerical interrelationships involving groupings of even numbers of weft threads was an established or subconscious major influence.

Fabric patterns that were the result of using complex warp sequences of different colors of threadcrossed by complex weft sequences also of different colors not only look sophisticated but challenged minds, eyes, and hands to produce. Several quilts of complex warp patterned material survive, exhibiting numerous variations within the patches of each quilt. One such quilt contained 17 different examples, 10 of which used one of 5 different warp sequences. This fabric seems to have been restricted to use for clothing, with discarded scraps from clothing construction as well as salvaged portions from worn-out clothing being made into quilts. Complex warp patterns were also executed in different weights of white thread to produce a textual, usually "window pane check" pattern. This fabric was favored for bed coverlets and could be trimmed with macramé net and tasselled borders on three sides.

Boutonné patterns require the use of a complex warp and complex weft of different weights of white thread. During the weaving process, thick weft threads are manipulated by hand into raised tufts of short loops. These boutonnes are produced in groups which form alternating geometric shapes in bands across the fabric, squares, crosses, diamonds and circles being those in popular use. This fabric was reserved for bedspreads and was also usually trimmed on three sides with macramé net and tasselled borders.

Surviving examples of Louisiana Acadian bedding textiles are numerous, particularly when compared to the rare survival of articles of clothing made from homespun and woven fabrics. These survival differences are probably due to the Acadian custom of _l'amour de Maman_. This was the incredible custom of Acadian mothers supplying each of their daughters with an extensive trousseau of homespun and woven bedding, usually consisting of 12 blankets, 12 bedspreads, 6 sheets, 12 towels, 4 mattress covers, a bolster and two pillows. Considering the larger families of the 18th and 19th centuries, numbering upwards to 16 or more, this custom would have represented an almost unfathomable amount of labor, possible only because of l'amour de Maman. When commercial machine-made fabrics became affordable to the Acadians, probably by the mid-19th century, they gradually took the place of home produced cotonade for use in clothing. This is probably the reason for the rarity today of the survival of costume articles in homespun fabrics. However, even late 19th century costume articles of commercially produced cloth are quite rare survivors. Hence the study of the Acadian costume must result from examination of the few pieces extant, photographs beginning mostly in the late 19th century, drawings depicting Acadian subjects, contemporary narrative accounts commenting on the subject as well as collateral references to Canada and France.

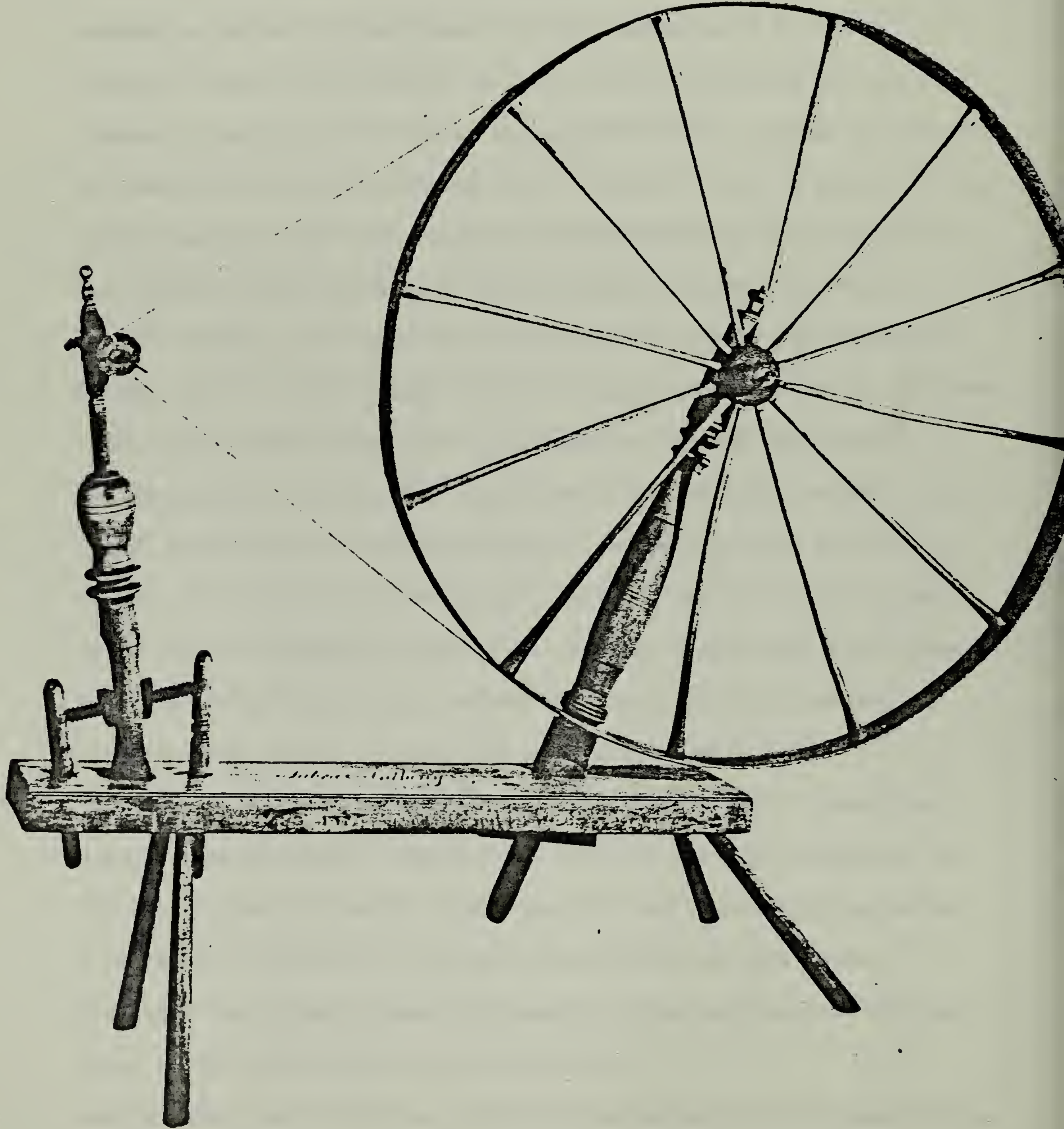
After studying the above mentioned sources, it is possible to describe the following outfits as being typical favored choices for 18th and 19th century Louisiana Acadians. Generally speaking, both men's and women's costumes were somewhat layered, loosely filled, generously proportioned but simply detailed and sewn. Cotton was the favored material, with wool being more appropriate for our relatively short mild winters. A typical "everyday" outfit for a man would have included the following: A shirt of solid or striped, or complex warp and weft cotonade with a narrow standup collar, buttoned only halfway down the front, with full cut long sleeves ending in a flat narrow cuff which buttoned closed; the front and back of the shirt could be of one piece, full cut, not tapered at the waist, and square cut across the bottom. Men's pants would be made of similar fabrics as their shirts. Their detailing included a button closed rectangular flap fly arrangement in front and limited pockets by comparison to today's men's pants. If striped fabric was used, it was mainly with the stripes running vertically. Wooden shoes were popular in French Canada and in France, but their use was unknown in Louisiana to this author. Leather for shoemaking was certainly available to the Acadians from their cattle raising. A wide-brimmed plaited and sewn palmetto hat would top off this costume in summer.

The typical woman's outfit would have been even more layered and included a blouse very similar in fabric and construction as the man's shirt, with the exception of the neck opening arrangement and closure. A simple opening just big enough to permit the head to go through, possibly augmented by a slit and buttons. The typical skirt was of solid or striped cotonade and hanging full length to the ankles. It would be constructed of one rectangular piece of fabric joined by one seam with the top edge hemmed to receive a drawstring, gathering the fabric at the waist. On this skirt the weft threads or stripes would run vertically. Over this skirt would be worn a similarly constructed nearly full length apron with an exposed pocket to one side. A shawl effect worn about the neck and over the shoulders was made of cotonade fabric, usually white, simply hemmed into a square, folded in half to form a triangle, placed around the neck, over the shoulder and with the two hanging corners tied in front. A garde soleil of cotonade fabric with cypress slats to stiffen the brim would top off this costume.

Because of the very limited domestic production of household utensils, the Acadians of Louisiana would have purchased cooking, food storage and table wares from importers. In the 18th century, Louisiana's importers would have dealt principally with merchandise brought in for sale from France. By the beginning of the 19th century, imports from England would have been introduced and would gradually take over that market almost completely. Because of the lack of Acadian households remaining intact into our times, one must rely on archeological sources for reference and specification of materials. Some of the items indicated by archeological sources as commonly available were: 1) in the late 18th century context, the following French wares: three legged cast iron pots, faience plates and platters (Rouen type), free blown green glass bottles, copper and brass cauldrons with iron handles, large redware bowls, provence jars in all sizes, iron knives with wooden handles, pewter and brass spoons and forks. 2) in the early 19th century context, the following English wares became increasingly available: blue or green shell edge plates, platters and serving pieces, banded ware bowls of all sizes and transfer ware dishes, serving and utilitarian pieces.

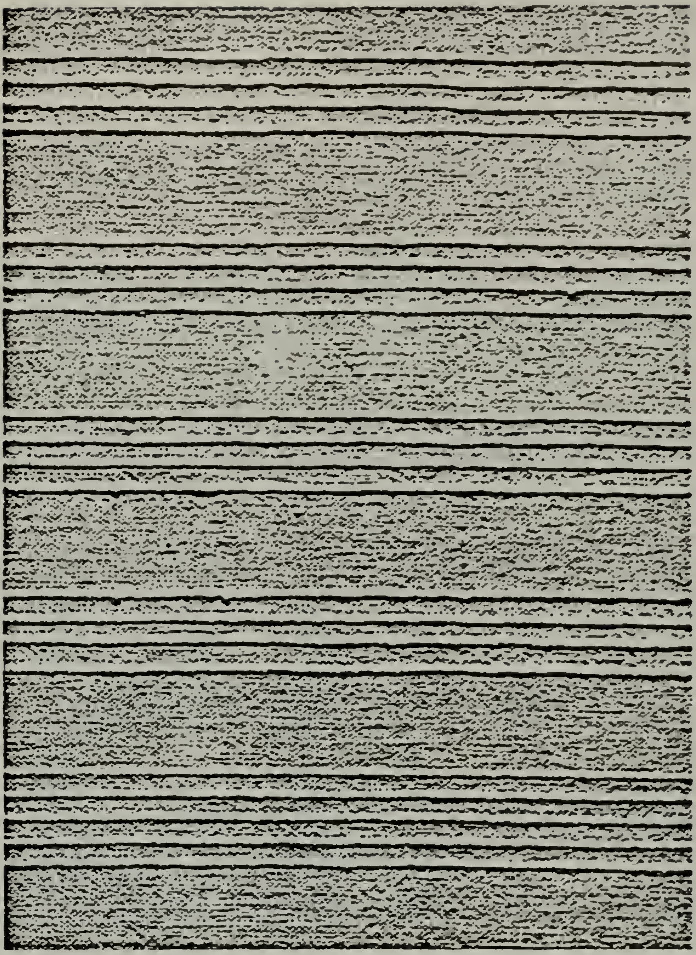
Lighting devices, in particular, candlesticks seem to have been scarce items by modern standards but followed the same changeover as the table wares in that they were generally of French manufacture in 18th century context and of English manufacture in 19th century context. The typical French 18th century brass candlesticks used had their hollow shafts cast in two sections and

can be identified by the not completely concealed joint between the two halves. Stylistically, the candlesticks forms are derived from the Baroque designs. The 19th century English candlesticks usually had hollow shafts cast in one piece. The shafts were decorated by ring turnings.



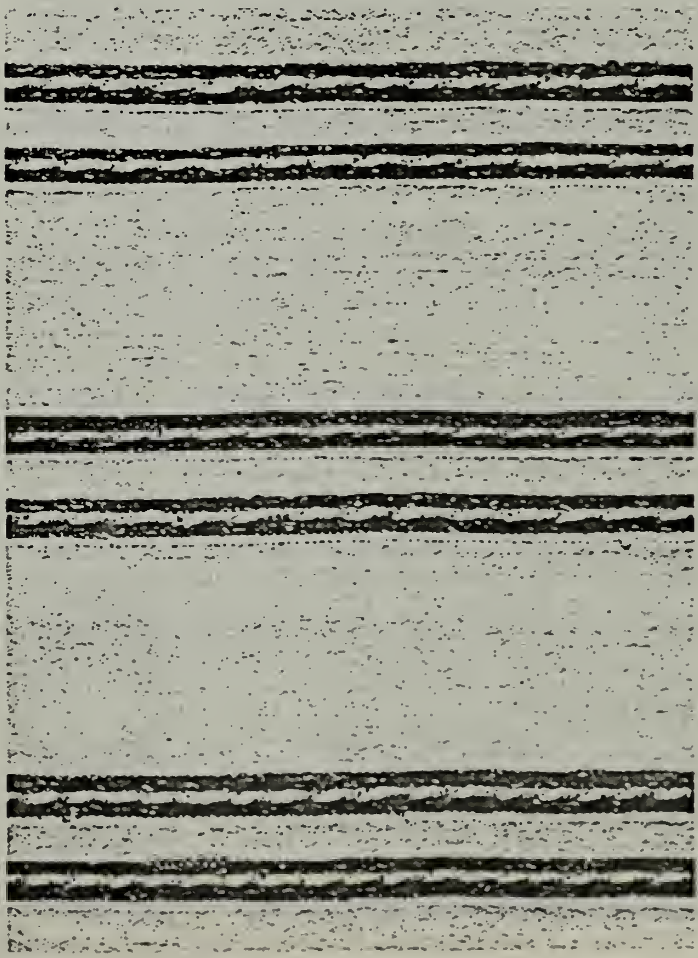
206 / Nova Scotia. River Bourgeois, Cape Breton.
About 1880
ROM 970.118.12. Gift of Mr and Mrs Harold B. Burnham
White coverlet. L. 201cm; w. 157cm

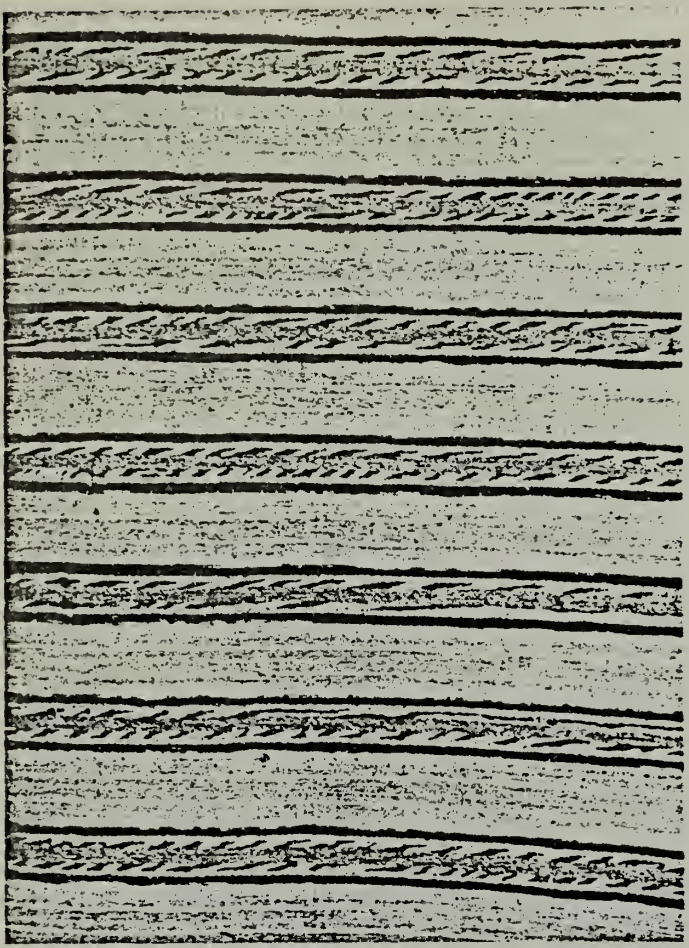
Natural white cotton warp and weft, the latter used double, with groups of four bands at intervals formed by using the weft sixfold. This is an example of the white *couvertures de mariage* from this area of Acadian culture, showing the same traditions as at Miscouche and Chéticamp (nos. 196, 200–1). Woven by Mme Tenase Degas.



207 / Nova Scotia. River Bourgeois, Cape Breton.
About 1850–60
ROM 970.118.14. Gift of Mr and Mrs Harold B. Burnham
Coverlet or overblanket. L. 213cm; w. 149cm

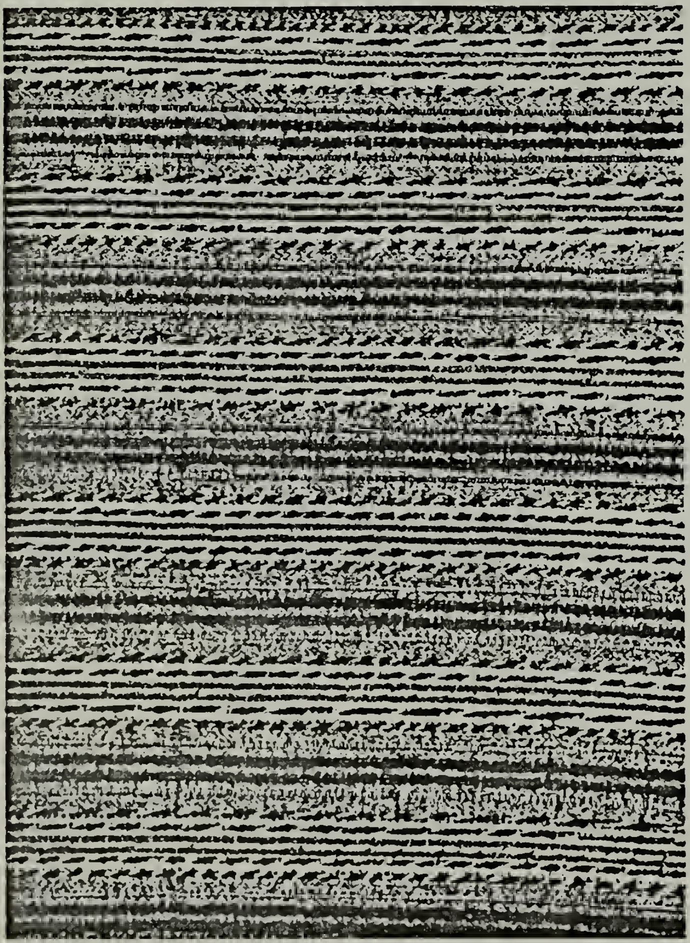
Natural white cotton warp woven with natural and faded pink wools. Two narrow bands of dark slate wool repeat regularly. These are edged by a white cotton cloth strip and centred by red and white cotton strips twisted together giving a barber pole effect. Woven by Mme Amable Degas.





208 / Nova Scotia. River Bourgeois, Cape Breton.
About 1850–60
ROM 970.118.15. Gift of Mr and Mrs Harold B. Burnham
Coverlet or overblanket. L. 200cm; w. 157cm

Natural white cotton warp woven with natural wool broken by white cotton strips; banded regularly with pink wool edged with blue and enclosing twisted strips of cotton cloth. Woven by Mme Amable Degas.



209 / Nova Scotia. River Bourgeois, Cape Breton.
About 1880
ROM 970.118.13. Gift of Mr and Mrs Harold B. Burnham
Coverlet or overblanket. L. 213cm; w. 159cm

Natural white cotton warp regularly banded with warm colourful yarns in red, pink, and light blue wools, and black woollen and white cotton cloth strips. The very heavy bands are of ochre wool and sixfold natural cotton twisted together and of black wool twisted in the same way with pink. Similar, but less colourful, blankets are known from Memramcook and Beaubassin in New Brunswick.

end of the Teche, a little community, as indolent as in the time of their master.

Two of his compatriots, poor natives of Dauphiné, whom he took in for several years, profited so well from his hospitality that they laid the foundation of their fortunes there, and today are the principal inhabitants of the district. One is named Sorel and the other Bérard. The fortune of the former is estimated at more than two hundred thousand piastres (more than a million livres). M. Sorel has so taken to heart the lessons in frugality he learned from the good Masse that he serves only water to travelers. Large bowls of milk cover his long and narrow table, and the other dishes are so scanty that not all of the guests are even permitted to see them.

The same severe economy reigns in the construction of his house. It is low, in order to be protected from the wind, solid doors and shutters, the same all amply provided with bolts and locks (all, however, made of wood). There is not to be found in that economical office a single piece of iron, not even a nail. However, we must except from our description as being without metal a little outhouse, where I am told there are numerous casks circled with thick bands of iron.

As for his compatriot, M. Bérard, things are entirely different. He is a friend of joy and good cheer, and one is always splendidly treated there. Also, God has made him the father of a numerous posterity. It was the acquisition of a few cows that laid the foundation of the fortune of these two individuals, like that of most of the inhabitants of the district. These cows, abandoned to themselves, have multiplied so that, after forty years, they form herds of several thousand, notwithstanding those that have been consumed locally and those that are annually sold in the city to those inhabitants along the river who cannot, or rather, do not know how to raise their own.

These first establishments of Louisiana colonists were made, as we have seen without the aid of the government, who at that time knew nothing of the nature, the extent or the resources of that country. It was only about the time that the colony was ceded to the Spanish (1765-1770) that a commandant, that is to say, someone representing the Government was appointed. This first governor was named *Fusilier*, and his widow and children still live in the colony.

What has most contributed to the importance of this post was the establishment here of the Acadians at great expense by the Spanish government. These unfortunate victims of their patriotism had been taken to San Domingo, where their population might have saved that island for France at the time, if so many of them had not perished of neglect. They have found a more favorable climate on the soil of Louisiana, where their originally small numbers have considerably multiplied, both on the River and here at the Atakapas. Among them are some who have become extremely rich, who have amassed herds of several thousand head of cattle. A great number of these people it is true simply vegetate in these beautiful regions. The difficulty of navigation, subject to expensive portages across land, at certain times of the year, and the all too common obstacles to commerce under the Spanish regime, which prevented the settlers from exporting their produce and importing necessary goods, caused some of them to decline into indolence. Rich and poor (if one can speak of poor, where one has the means to satisfy all of his ordinary wants), they have, both here and along the River retained their customs, these being much like those of our farmers in France. Through observation I cannot repeat too often, to point out how important it is, in founding colonies, to provide good stock as colonists.

These Acadians work their land themselves. The women and children go into the fields to pick corn and cotton, they take care of the barnyard, milk the cows, and spin the cotton into thread of which they make coarse muslin shirts, fine cloth, mosquito nets, and that multi-colored striped cotton cloth so agreeable to the eye, resembling very much our *siamoises*, out of which they make skirts and blouses, and for the men, pants and jackets.

The families descended from French officers or merchants, live quite differently. They live in indolent ease, even those with little money. They use a portion of their slaves as indoor servants, in an attempt to recapture a sense of the easy and sumptuous life. Several have fallen into this decadence. The Acadians, simpler and more economical, are prospering and will become, in consequence, more useful to the colony and the mother country.

The Acadians like to live to themselves and they have the good sense to have little to do with the families who are pretentious. These latter, however, seek out the acquaintance of the Acadians, and like very much to be a part of the joyful celebration of their balls.

All of the inhabitants have received free grants of land from the Spanish Government, which their descendants have subdivided. These grants are always of forty arpents deep by a varying

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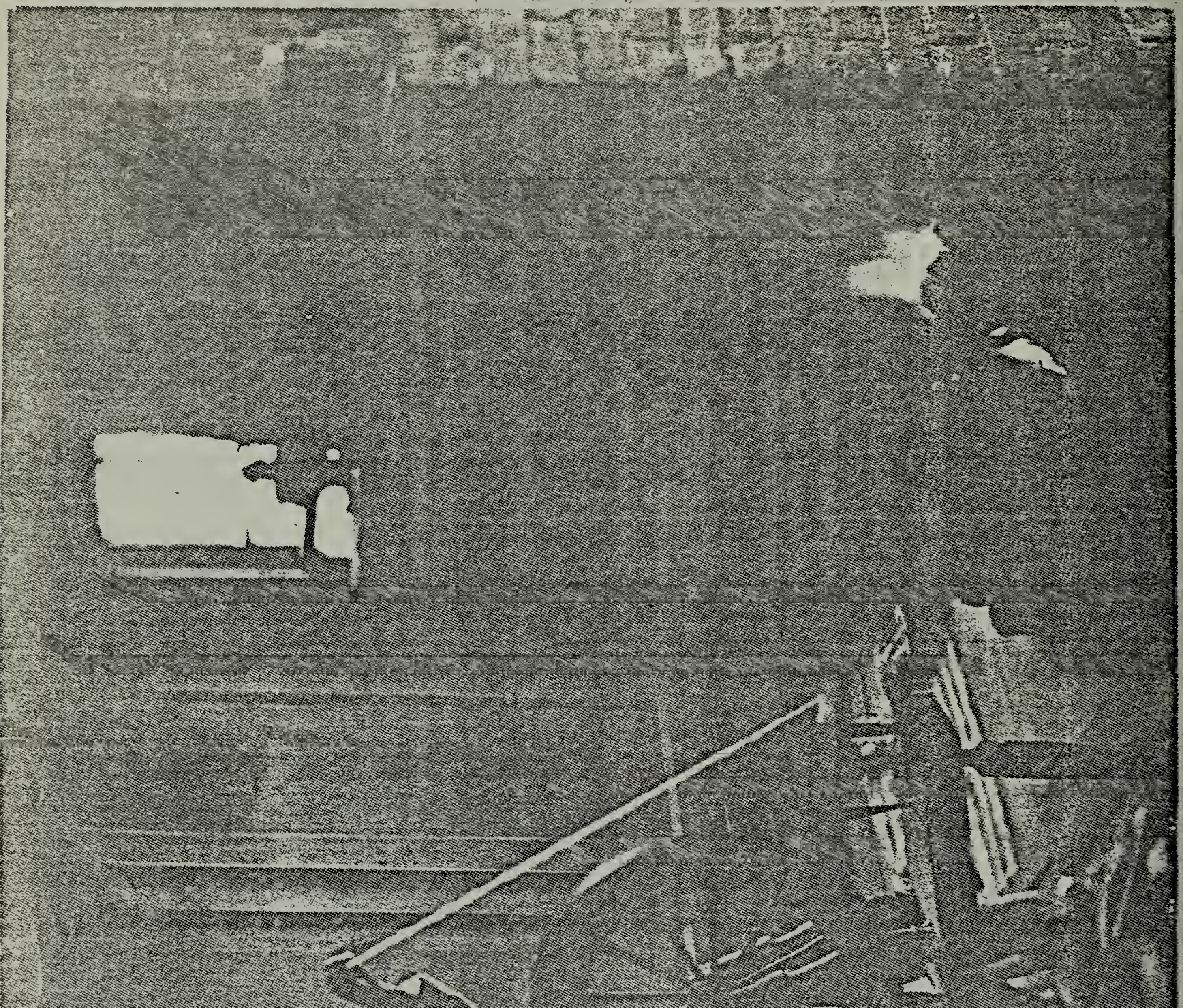

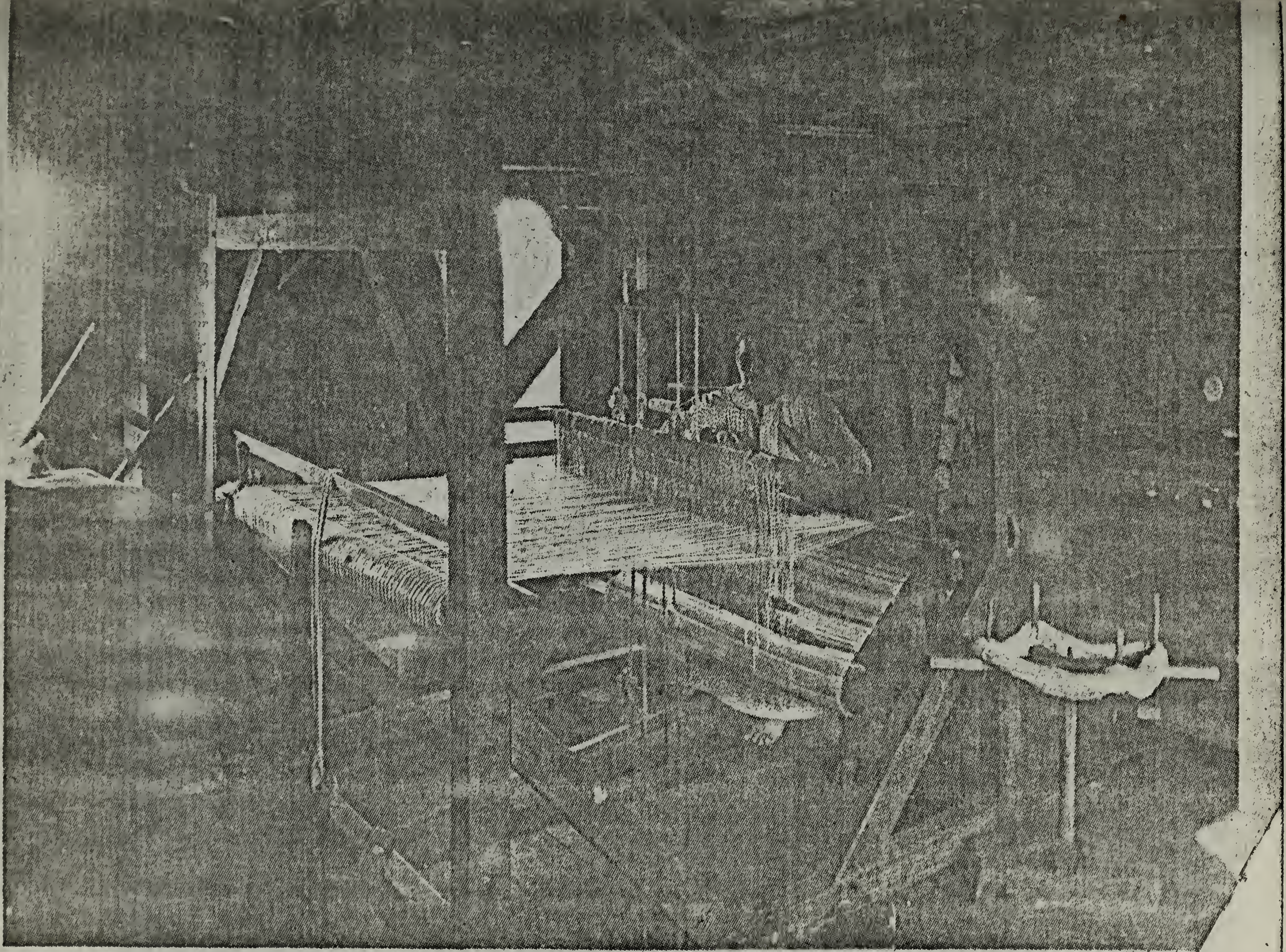

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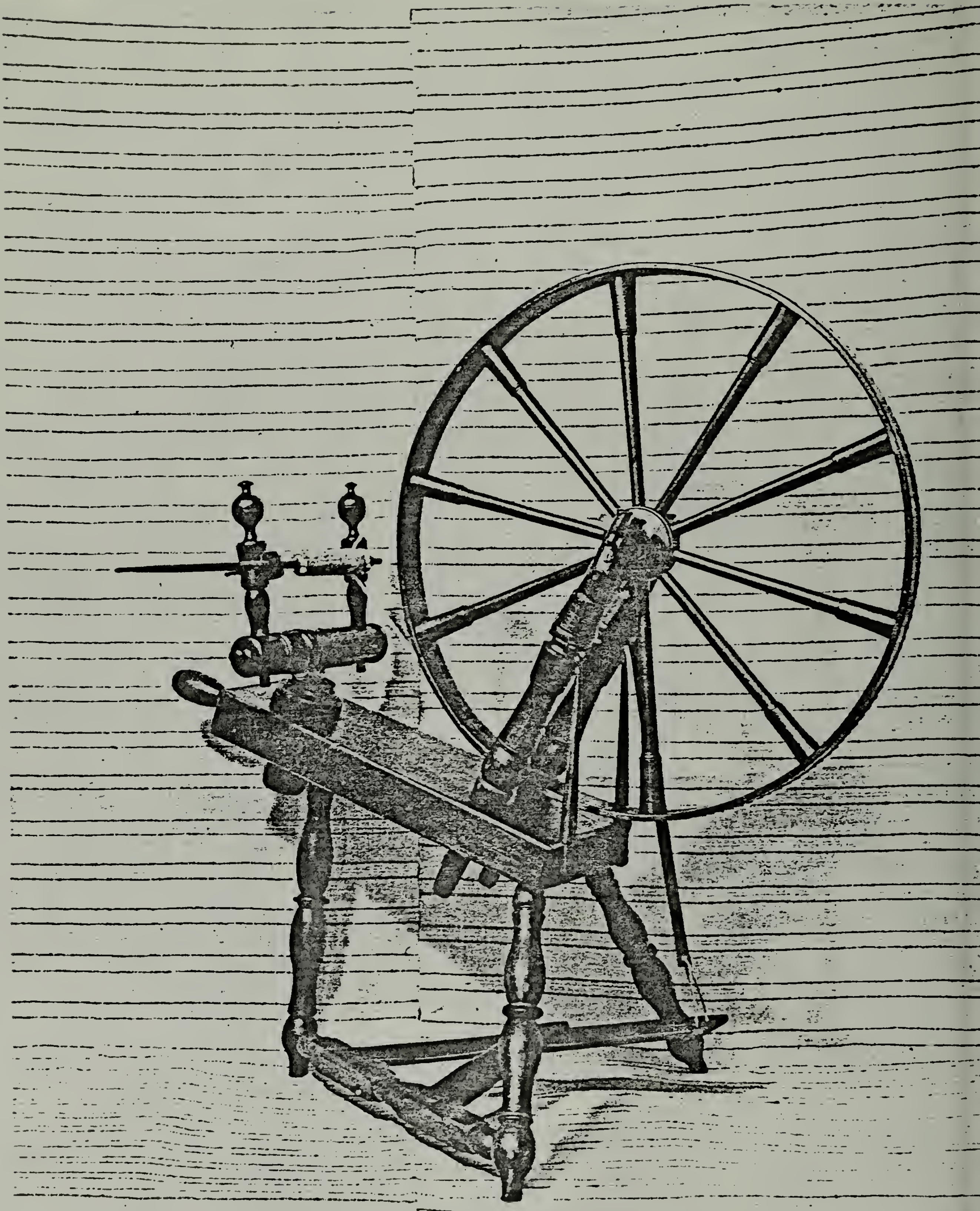
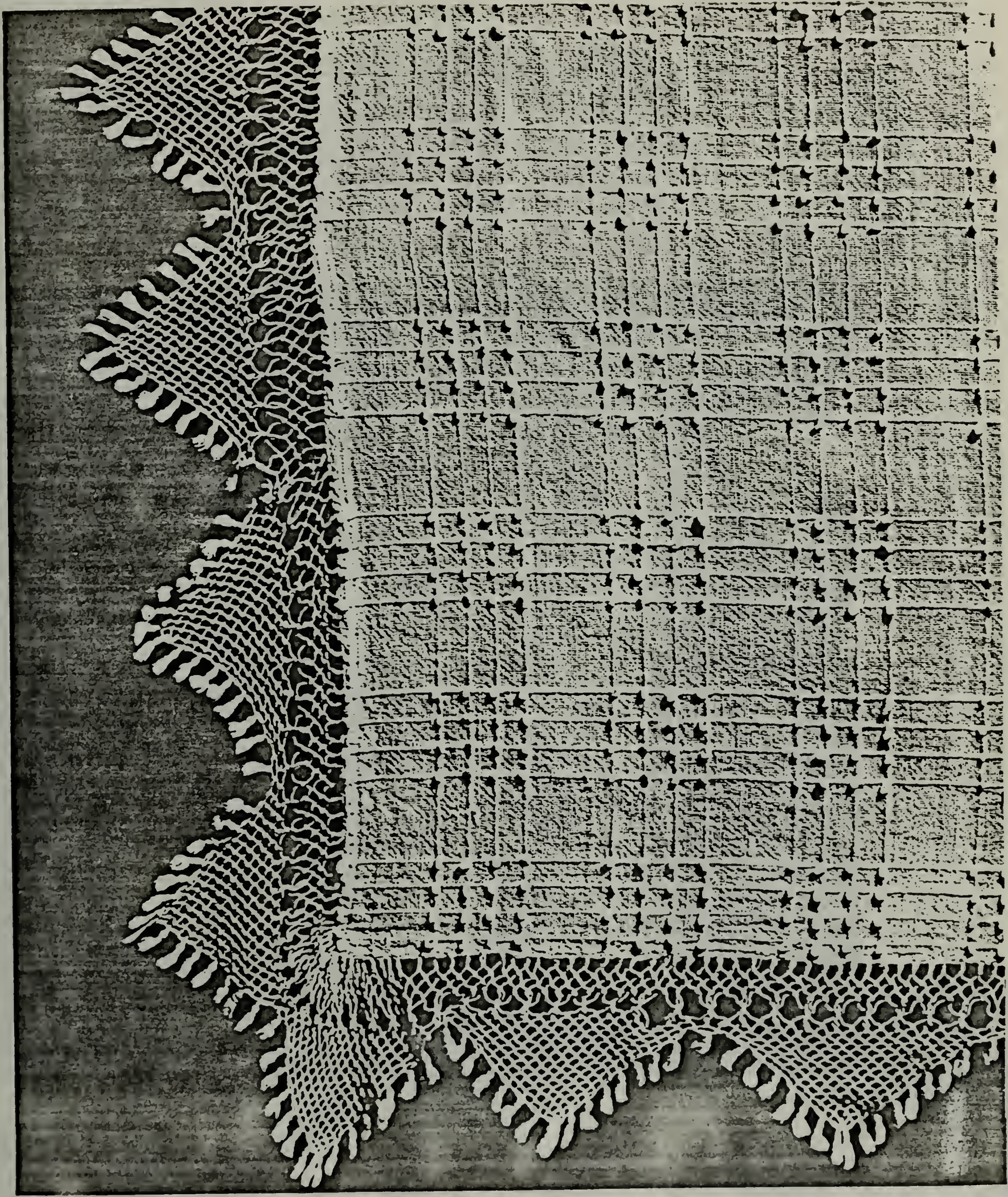
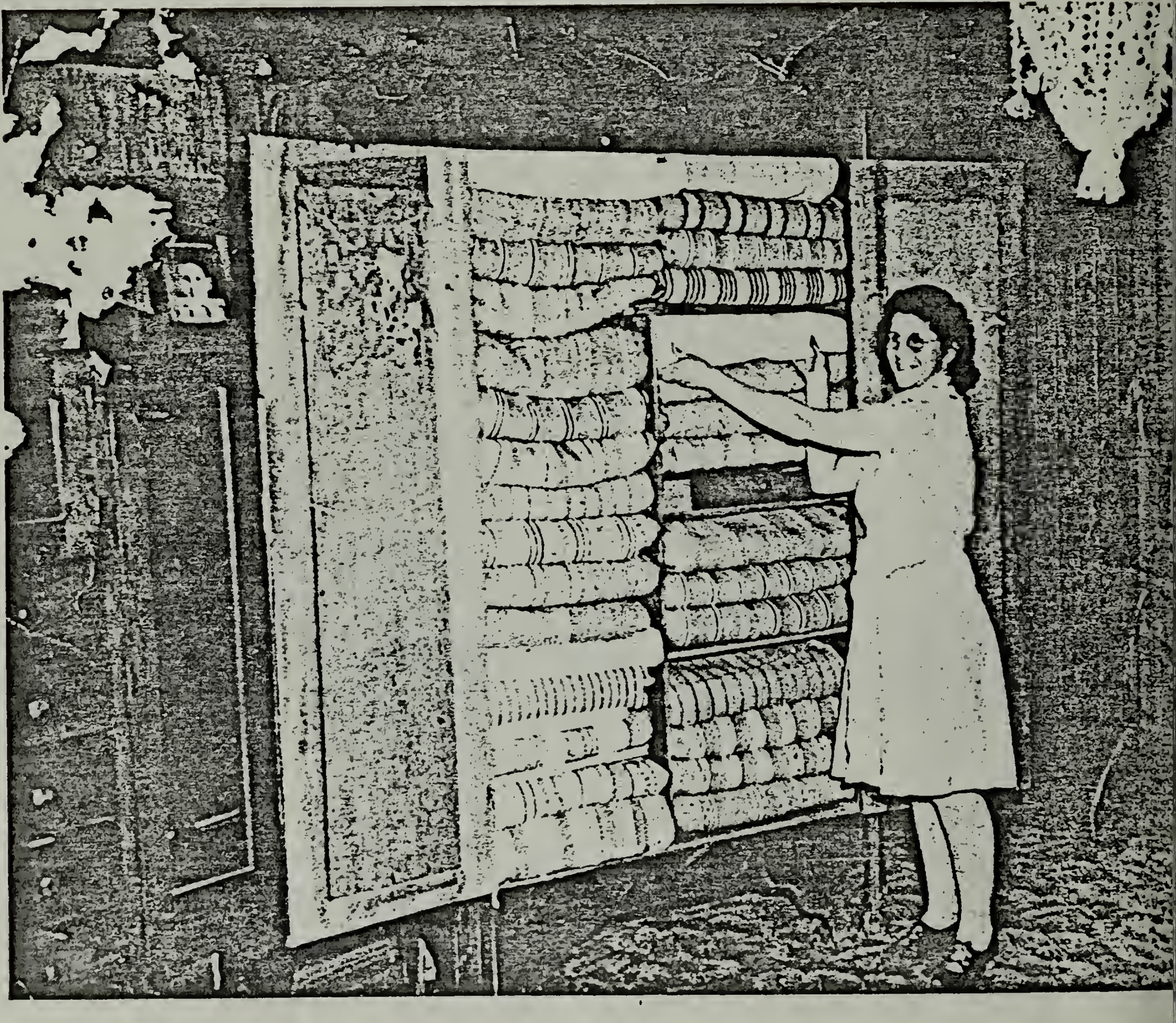


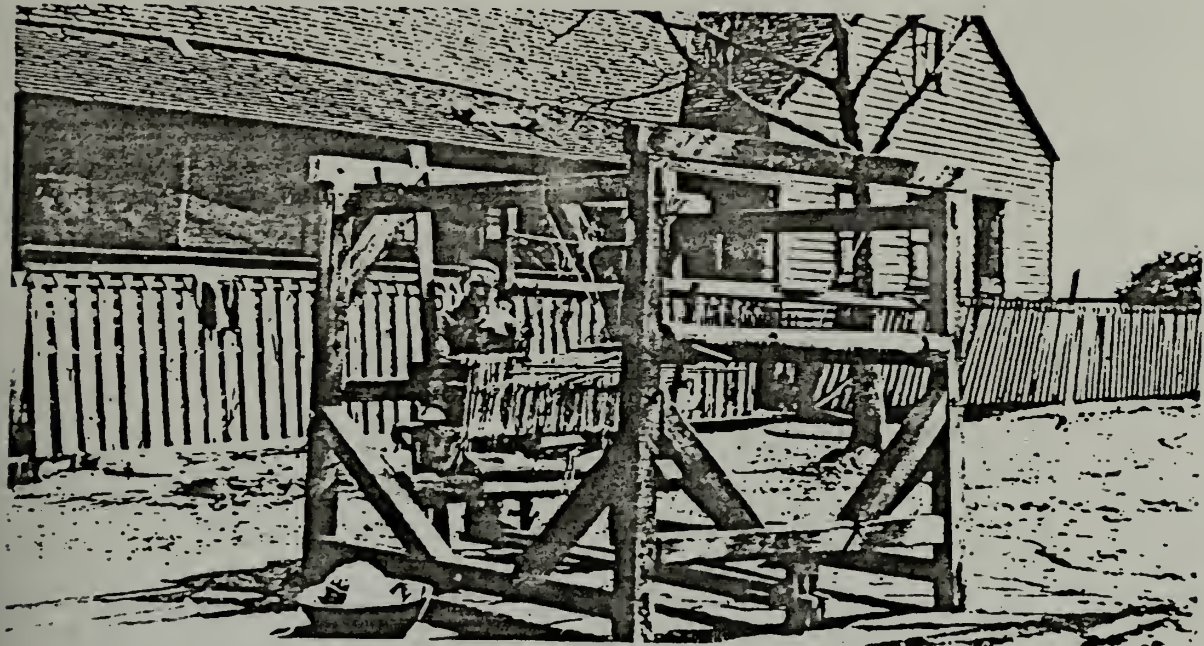
60. Rouet avec navette, vers 1890.



89. Couvre-lit, vers 1900.



116. Madame Racca près d'une armoire remplie de ses couvertures.

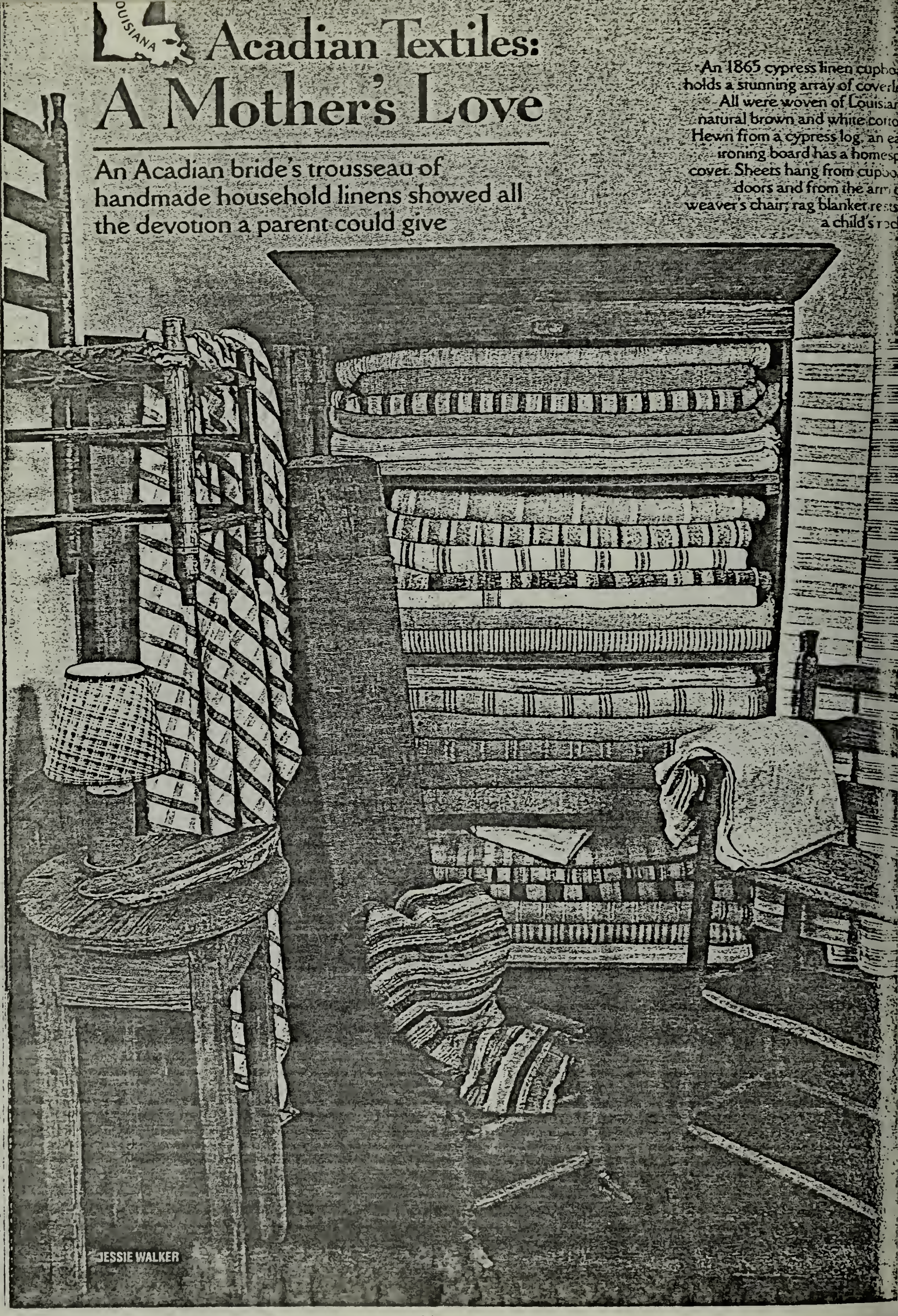


5

In the 1930's there was a great revival of interest in American folklore and traditional crafts, and writers and photographers recorded many aspects of Louisiana Cajun life. Photographs made during the decade show an Acadian woman, on the bank of a bayou, laundering clothes by pounding them with a *battoir* (1), as in the engraving on page 259; another woman, wearing a characteristic Acadian sunbonnet and standing beside a buggy (2); an Acadian farmer with a mule-drawn plow (3); a carpenter with typical handmade Acadian chairs (4)—their seats were of cowhide and some cowhide can be seen stretched on a board beside the carpenter. Other photographs show a woman working at a homemade loom (5); another woman at a spinning wheel (6); and a boat-maker (7) with his four sons building a dugout pirogue.

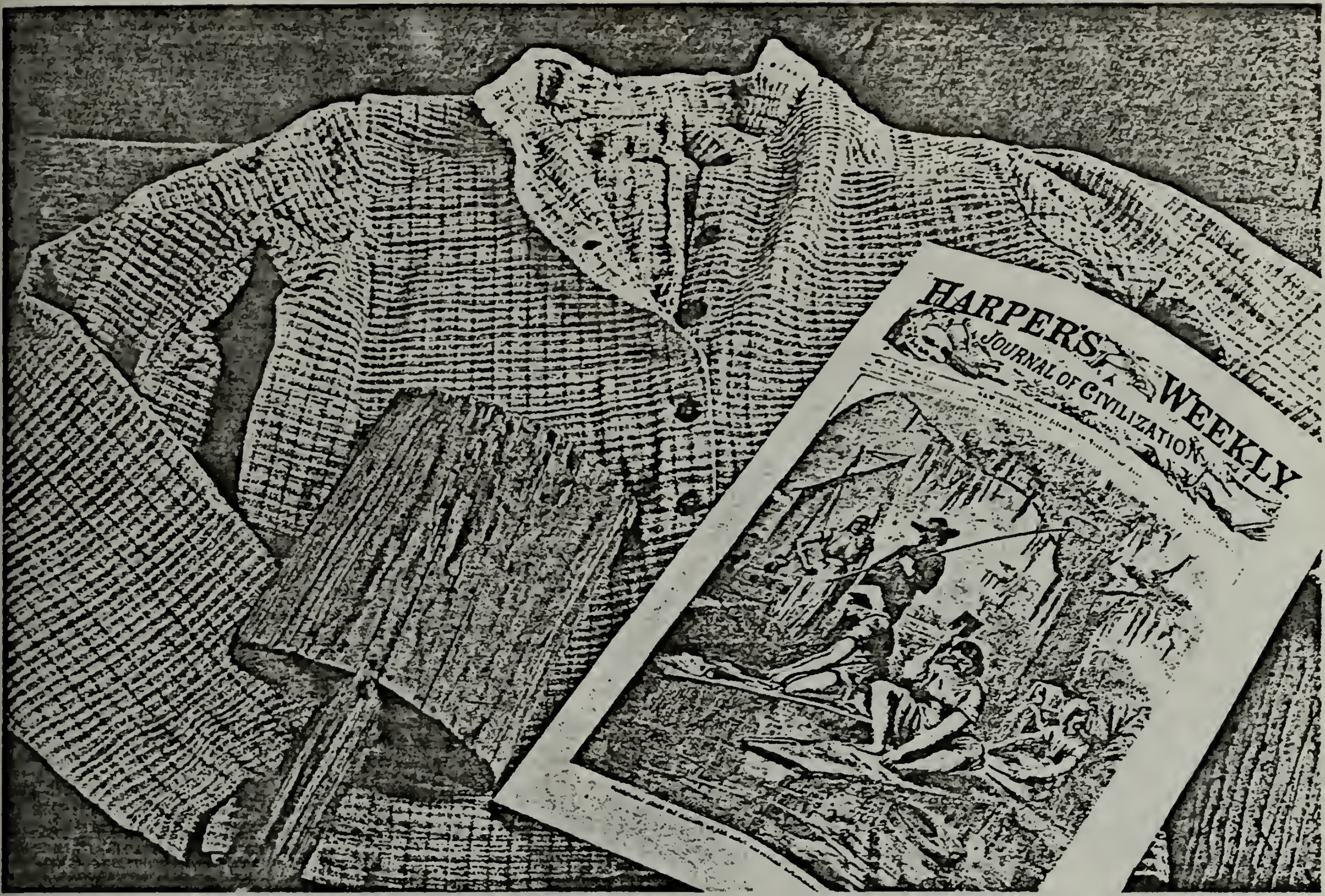
Acadian Textiles: A Mother's Love

An Acadian bride's trousseau of handmade household linens showed all the devotion a parent could give

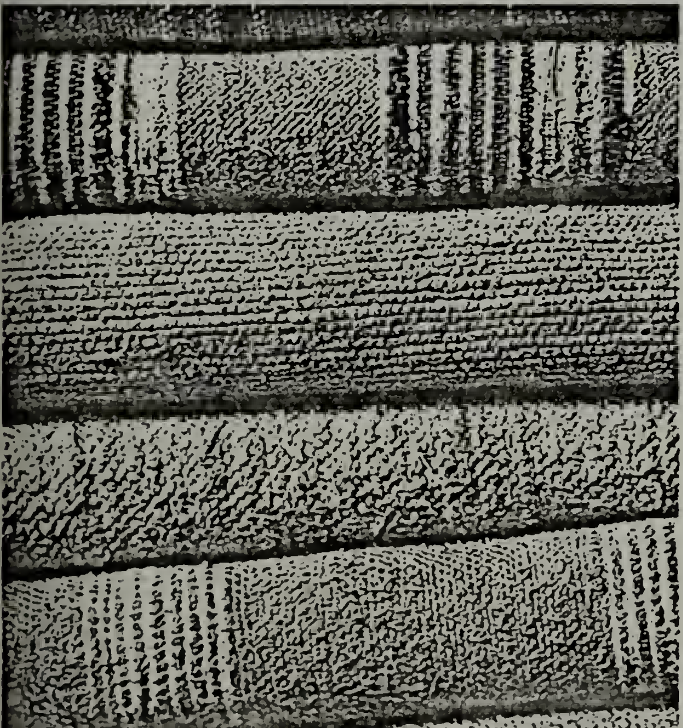


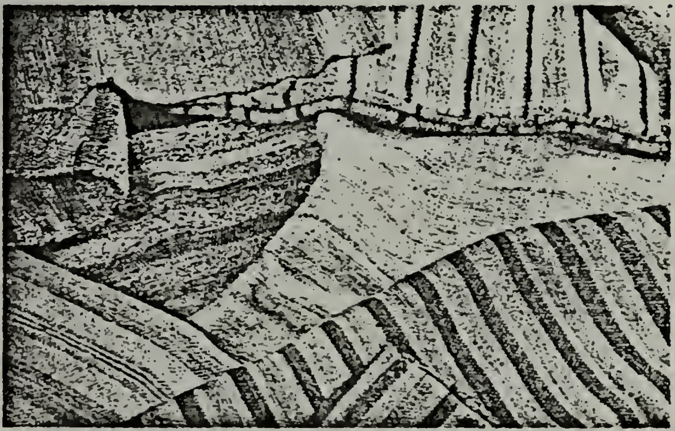
An 1865 cypress linen cupbo
holds a stunning array of coverl
All were woven of Louisiar
natural brown and white cotto
Hewn from a cypress log, an ea
ironing board has a homesp
cover. Sheets hang from cupbo
doors and from the arm o
weaver's chair; rag blanket rests
a child's roc

JESSIE WALKER



An extremely rare shirt of lightweight *cotonnade*: Thrifty Acadians wore out their clothes, then tore them into ribbons to make quilts. Wooden paddle (*battoir*) came in handy for beating clothes clean, as demonstrated on an 1866 magazine cover.



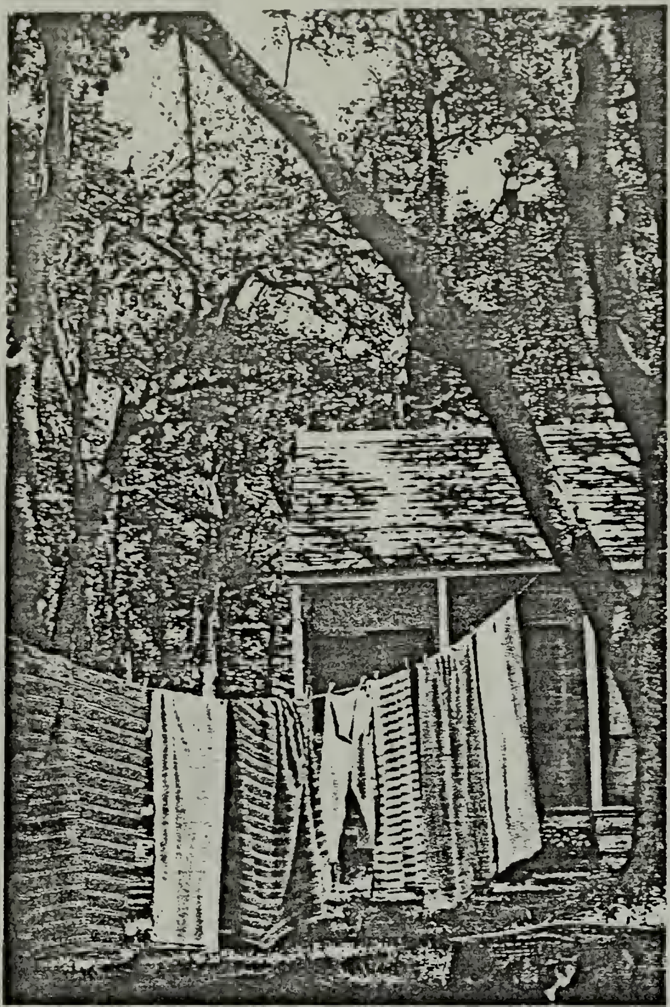


Each blanket took weeks to produce. Those at left show the possibilities of natural *coton jaune* (tan cotton); commercial and vegetable dyes colored blankets above.

Imagine if every time you needed a new dish towel you had to first plant some cotton, then weave the cloth from which you could eventually sew your towel. For Louisiana's Acadian immigrants, life was once just this hard. Forced from Canada by the British in the aftermath of the French and Indian War, Acadians brought many traditions with them to their new Southern homeland. Of all these customs, *l'amour de maman* ("a mother's love") —the weaving of a lifetime supply of household linens by a mother for each of her daughters—was perhaps the most remarkable.

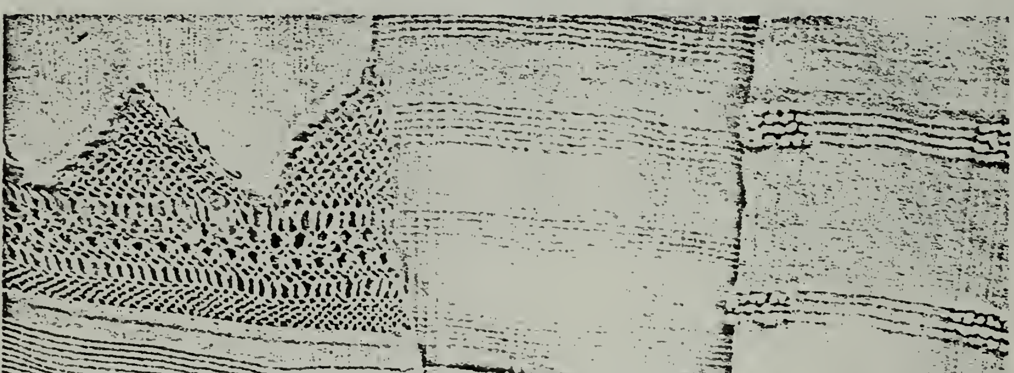
MORE ▶

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE FOR DETAILS.



Outside an 1827 *maison dimanche* (a cottage reserved for Sundays), cottons in three typical colors: white, indigo blue, and tan. Collectors seek clothing such as the pants at center.

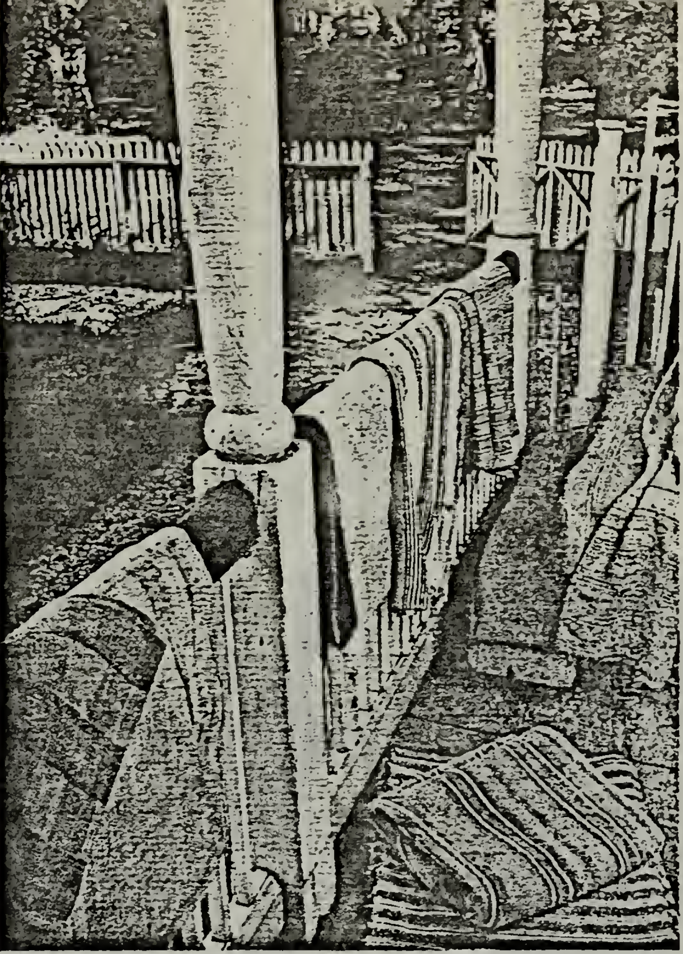
Tools of the trade: Warping paddle (background) measured lengths of white warp threads (center). Shuttle is threaded with blanket-weight *coton jaune*. Corncobs made ideal —and practical—spindles for winding yarn.



Symbols of purity reserved for births, deaths, and sickrooms, white Acadian bed linens are also very rare today. Weavers achieved texture variations by interspersing heavy warp or weft threads through a lighter-weight body. Two spreads boast borders of macramé.

Accustomed t colder climate (first in France, later i northeastern Canada) Acadians adapted age-ol techniques for spinnin and weaving wool to th creation of cotton textile —fabrics suitable to Louisiana's subtropical environment. In the absenc of commercial dyes, th settlers embraced th region's indigenous *coto jaune*, a naturally colore fiber that spanned th spectrum from off-whit to brown. Indigo blue an various vegetable dye also enhanced each complete *amour de maman* which included no les than 12 blankets, 12 coverlets, six sheets, 12 towels, four mattress covers two pillows, one bolster and one quilt.

Indigo-decorated split-oak basket overflows with yarns of assorted weights. Cotton balls were seeded, then carded, then spun into skeins. Winder holds more yarn.

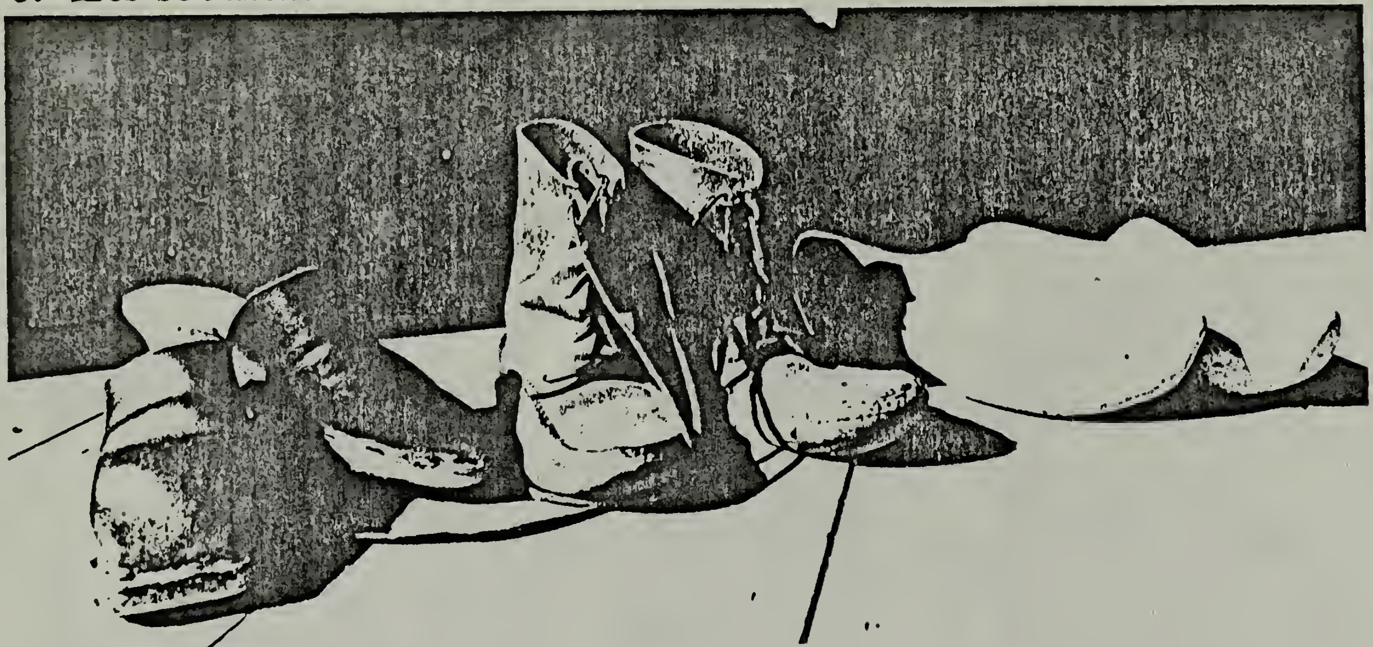


Using pre-industrial-revolution technology, Acadian weavers achieved a broad range of colors and patterns, as seen in these varied homespun pieces. Stripes were a favorite.

Wash-day basics: A *battoir,* lard soap, and large redware basin share the table with a quilt and blankets. Early-19th-century Acadian table (see right also) disassembles into three pieces.

Three beauties: a cotton blanket (foreground) made from used clothing, and rare wool blankets (insects preyed upon wool textiles), one with stripes of green vegetable dye.

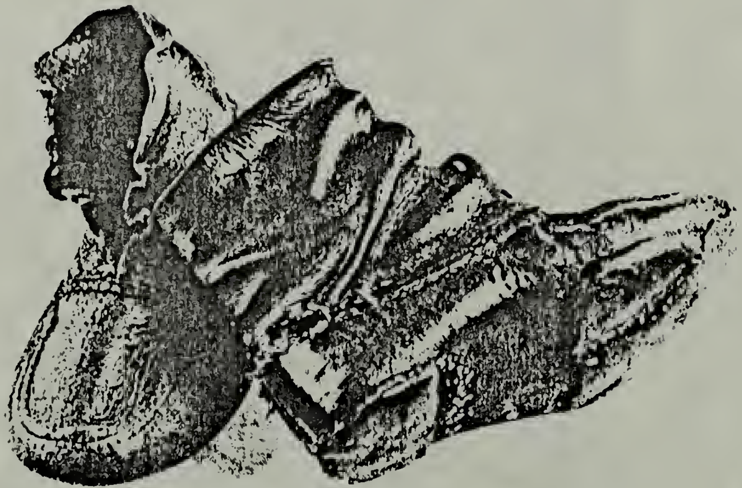
6. Les souliers



6.1 Galoches, bottes et sabots.

32. A leur arrivée au pays, les Acadiens ont très vite adopté les souliers des indigènes. Comment nommait-on ces chaussures?
Quels autres genres de souliers ont-ils aussi chaussé?
Quelle habitude avaient les enfants durant l'été?
Voir aussi les textes 5 et 12.

33. Comme pour les coiffes, prépare une page où tu illustres les différentes chaussures que nous avons actuellement, puis établis une comparaison avec ceux de nos ancêtres.



6.2 Souliers de peau.

texte 17:

Les bottes

Les souliers de peau, pour l'extérieur, l'été, le printemps et l'automne, et pour l'intérieur des maisons, étaient confortables comme des pantoufles. L'hiver c'était moins commode à cause de la neige. Mais on savait y remédier. Au lieu de souliers, c'est des hausses qu'on confectionnait. C'était une espèce de bottes en peaux qui montait jusqu'au-dessus de la cheville ou jusqu'au haut du mollet. On n'utilisait pas de lacet, mais on faisait un pli en arrière du mollet et on attachait le haut avec une ficelle.

Chiasson, A. *Chéticamp, Histoire et traditions acadiennes.* Moncton: Editions des Aboiteaux, 1972, p. 52.

28. Comment transformait-on une paire de souliers de peau en bottes?

texte 18:

Les caristaux (canisteaux)

Il existait une autre sorte de chaussures, plus simples de fabrication et plus originales d'apparence: les caristaux. On levait toute ronde la peau d'un pied de bête à cornes (orignal, chevreuil), du genou au sotille. Ensuite le bas était cousu, cela se portait tel quel, poil en dehors. Ainsi chaussé, on allait à l'école, à l'église; même le servant de messe portait des caristaux.

Chiasson, A. *Chéticamp, Histoire et traditions acadiennes.* Moncton: Editions des Aboiteaux, 1972, p. 52.

29. Quelle était l'originalité des caristaux?

texte 19:

Les souliers français et les galoches

"Un beau jour, vinrent les cordonniers qui confectionnaient des chaussures en cuir, appelées souliers français"[1]. Il n'était pas question à cette époque de fabriquer des chaussures en quantité à l'avance et de les mettre en vente. Tout était fait sur demande seulement. Lorsque quelqu'un voulait une paire de bottes, bottines ou souliers, il se rendait chez le cordonnier avec sa pièce de cuir. Celui-ci prenait les mesures du pied et faisait les chaussures demandées... Ces chaussures étaient très durables et quand, au bout de deux ans, les semelles venaient à manquer, on les ramenaient chez le cordonnier qui les foutait à neuf.

"La galoche était une grosse pantoufle, faite avec un vieux soulier, dont l'arrière, sauf la semelle, a été enlevé et dans laquelle on entre, littéralement de plein pied"[2].

Robichaud, D. *Le grand Chipagan, histoire de Shippagan.* Montréal: Imprimerie Gagné, 1976, p. 64.

[1] Chiasson, A. *Chéticamp, histoire et traditions acadiennes.* Moncton: Editions des Aboiteaux, 1972, p. 52.

[2] Poirier, P. *Glossaire Acadien.* Moncton: Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes, Université de Moncton, 1977.

30. Quelles différences y avait-il entre un soulier de peau et un soulier français?

31. Si tu avais à faire une galoche acadienne, comment procèderais-tu?

texte 7:

Le costume de l'Acadienne au XIXe siècle

Par dessus le cotillon, il y avait la cotte, bien plissée à la ceinture, avec une mégaillère au bon endroit; et, attaché, ou boutonné à la cotte, le mantelet, qui recouvrait l'échine jusqu'au cagouet.

Le mantelet s'échancrait par devant, depuis le haut des jabots jusqu'aux épaules, jusqu'à la gorge; mais sans qu'il en résultât la plus légère indiscrétion dont aurait pu s'alarmer la pudeur... Dans l'échancrure, était posé un élégant mouchouer de soie.

Poirier, P. *Le parler franco-acadien et ses origines*. Québec: Imprimerie Franciscaine Missionnaire, 1928, p. 222.

texte 8:

Les sous-vêtements de la femme

Entre une longue chemise de corps et le mantelet et la jupe, l'Acadienne portait un petit corps et un jupon d'étoffe ou de toile.

Arseneault, J. *Le vêtement en Acadie d'autrefois*. Moncton: Fondation d'Etudes du Canada, 1977.

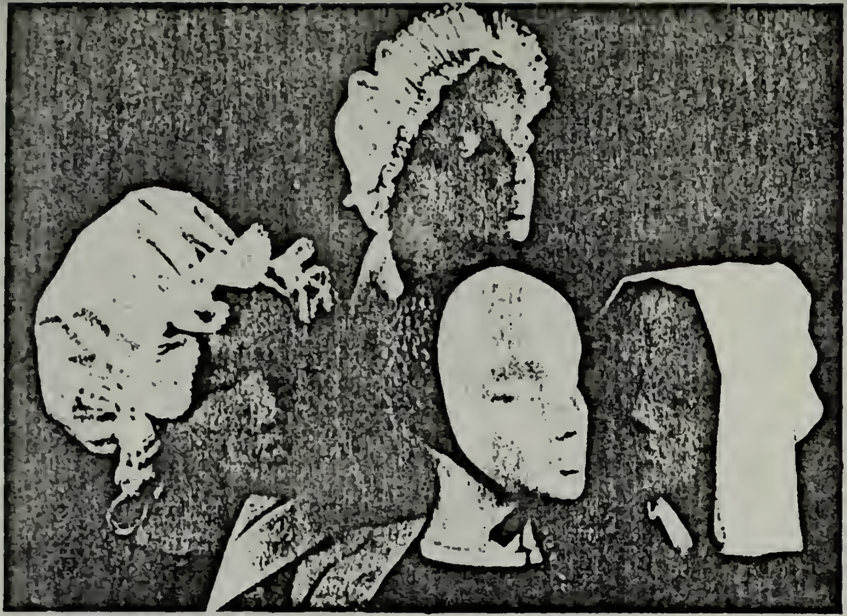
14. Décris le costume féminin du XIX^{e} siècle en employant les termes de l'époque.
Puis, dans tes propres termes, définis chacun des vêtements que tu viens de nommer.

15. Est-ce que la mode d'aujourd'hui s'inspire encore de certains aspects de cet ancien costume ou est-il complètement tombé en désuétude?

16. En observant bien les photos où figure le costume féminin, découvre quels matériels étaient utilisés pour les confectionner.

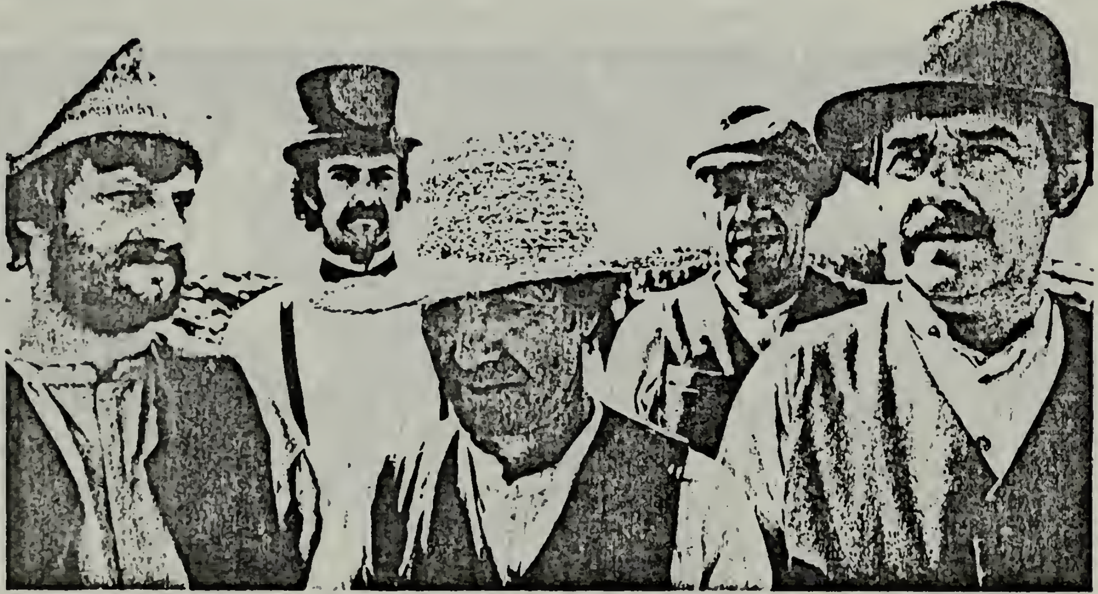
17. Les vêtements que les Acadiennes faisaient étaient d'une simplicité remarquable. Essaie d'imaginer et de découvrir comment utiliser le tissu, couper et coudre une jupe et un corsage avec le moins de coutures et de gaspillage possible. Explique ton procédé, puis demande à ton professeur d'expliquer la manière de faire des Acadiennes d'autrefois.

4. Les coiffes



4.1 Coiffes des femmes.

12. Suivant la saison, mais aussi parfois suivant la région, les Acadiens et les Acadiennes revêtaient différentes coiffes. Lesquelles?
Explique quand et par qui chacune d'elles était portée.
Voir aussi les textes 6 et 9.

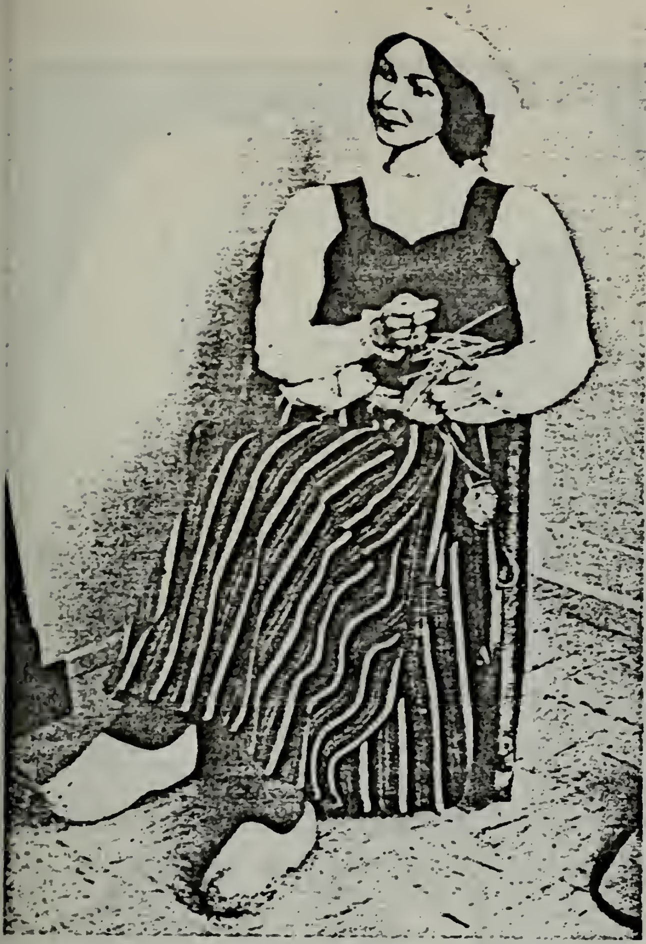


4.2 Coiffures des hommes.

13. Quelles sont les coiffes que nous voyons le plus fréquemment de nos jours?
Compose une page sur les coiffures (chapeaux, foulards) modernes en te servant d'illustrations que tu découperas dans les journaux, les revues ou autres.

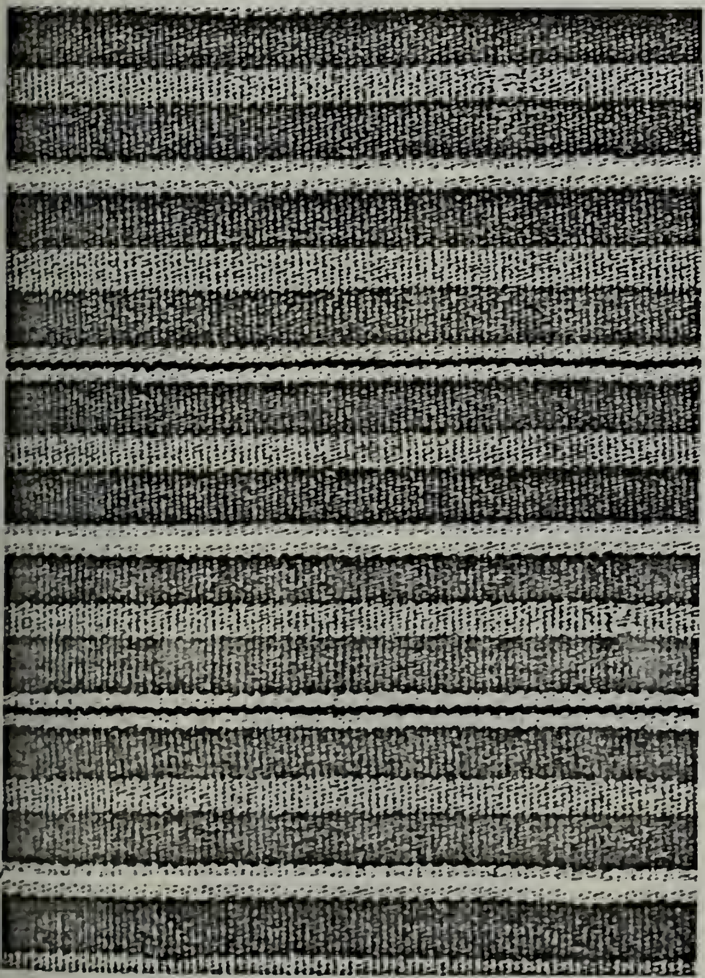
3.4 Acadiens de l'Ile du Prince-Edouard assistant à la Convention National de Caraquet en 1905.

3.5 Reconstitution historique.



Grand Pré National Park. Lent by the Nova Scotia Museum.
8031
Woman's skirt, weft-faced tabby.
Circumference 262cm; w. 90cm

Black and natural white wool entirely covering fine natural white cotton warp (all z singles). The black ground is regularly broken by white bands, and two white pin stripes are centred on each black one. This is the only old Acadian skirt known to have survived in its original form. The length of closely woven material has been joined by one seam, then one edge has been pleated into a linen waistband. The use of cotton warp shows that it is unlikely to be quite as old as no. 77, but the sewing had been done with a woollen thread and the waistband with a bleached linen one (s singles), both of which are early features. The rest of the figure is dressed in reproduction clothing, but the skirt is a very rare and interesting piece. (Photograph: Burnham)



77 / Prince Edward Island. Chapel Creek, Rustico. End of the 18th century
CAGM. Collection of Robert Harris
Skirt length (fragment), weft-faced tabby. L. 43cm; w. 30cm

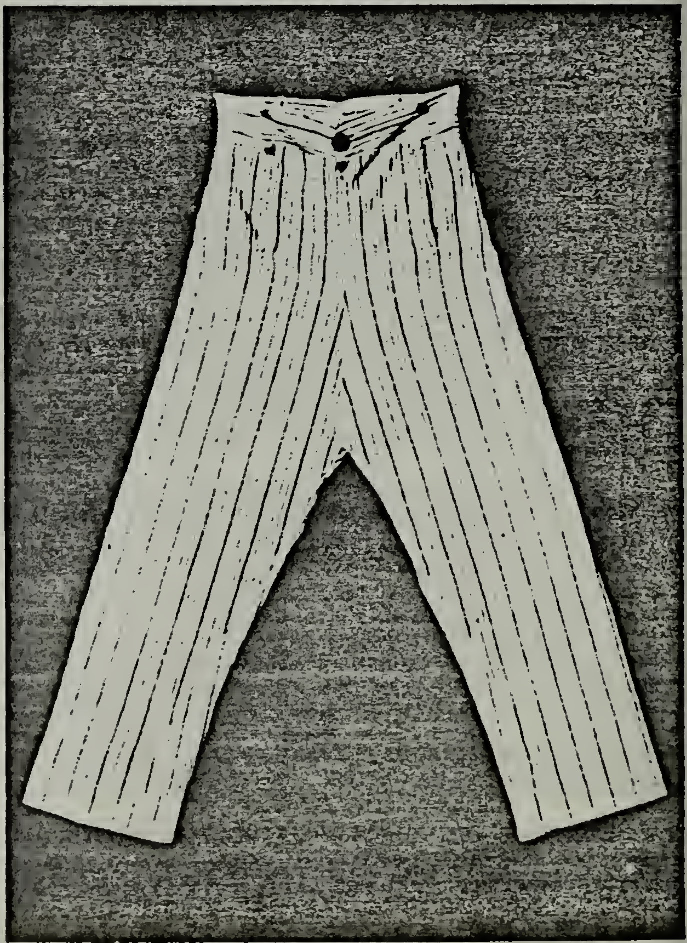
Banded in medium and deep indigo blue and red wool, and half-bleached linen entirely covering the half-bleached linen warp (all z singles). This was tradionally woven about 1795 by Harriet Gallant, daughter of Grandpère Gallant, the first Acadian settler at Chapel Creek. There seems no reason to doubt the story as Robert Harris, the artist, obtained it from her nephew Hubert Gallant, in 1901. At that time he was 80, and could have received it directly from the weaver. The use of linen indicates an early date, and the quality of the wool and the fineness of the weave (7 ends and 20 picks per cm) both support this. As is the case with almost all everyday costume in Canada, little notice was taken of it by chroniclers. The only firm evidence that we have about Acadian clothing is the type of skirt worn by the women made of fine materials such as this. They were woven with bands entirely covering the warp, a tremendous amount of work. When finished, the length was turned on its side and pleated at the waist. The bands hung vertically, the width being just sufficient for an ankle-length skirt.

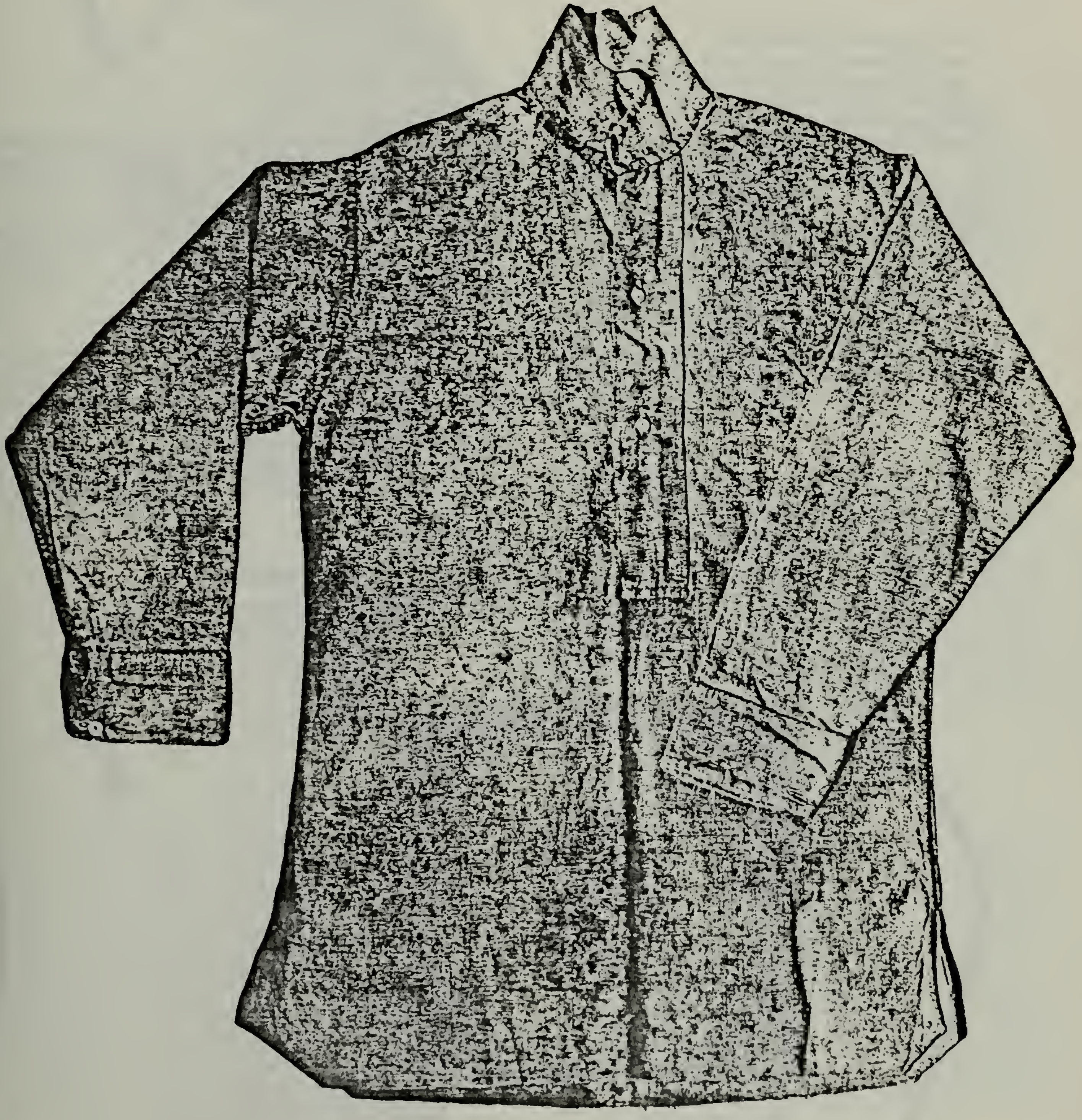
84 / Ontario. Dunwich Township, Elgin County.
About 1860
ROM 952.214. Gift of the Misses F. and E. Pearce
Man's shirt, tabby. L. 94cm

Bleached linen (z singles). The flax was grown and processed on the farm of the donors' grandparents, and their grandmother, Ann Moorhouse Pearce, wove the linen and made the shirt. The linen is heavier than in no. 83 and is probably much more typical of the quality normally produced.

85 / Ontario. Vineland area, Lincoln County. About 1843
ROM 966.192.1. Gift of Mr Norman Macdonald
Pair of man's trousers, tabby. L. 101cm

Natural white cotton warp with fine stripes in blue and pinkish-red, woven with bleached linen (all z singles). These trousers were worn by David Housser when he was married in 1843. The material was either woven at home or by one of the local professional weavers, possibly Samuel Fry who was a near neighbour. The cutting and making up is expert, but may well have been done at home. The brass buttons are a stylish touch that would have been bought. A very smart garment has been locally made from locally woven cloth. A pair of white linen trousers of similar date is in the Jordan Museum of the Twenty.





93. Chemise de Nankin ou coton brun, vers 1868.

"verse ami grégoire" Plate. This plate has a flat bottom with a very steep rim similar to plate C-44. Plates of this type were used to hold both food and drink and are sometimes called dessert plates. This example is 20.9 cm in diameter and 3.6 cm high. There is a blue tint to the white enamel, and the paste is buff colored. A border design of festoons alternating with a trellis-and-dot pattern encircles the inside of the rim. Two shades of blue are used in the decoration. A verse is inscribed on the inside bottom of the plate and is set off by a simple design both above and below. The inscription reads:

verse ami grégoire
a boire
de ce jus charmant
je sens que mon ame
s'enflame
a chaque moment . . . *bis*

This may be translated as:

Serve friend Gregory
to drink
of this charming *juice*
I feel that my soul
is inflamed
at *each* moment . . . *again*

The "*bis*" ("again") indicates the verse was meant as a drinking song or toast. This type of inscription was called a *chanson à boire* or "Bacchus rhyme."

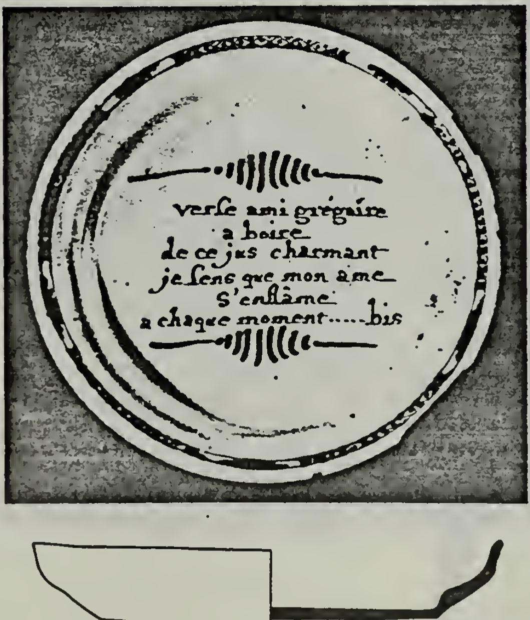
The design on the plate indicates it was manufactured in either Rouen or Nevers. The trellis border is characteristic of Rouen, though Rouennais styles were widely copied (see below). The *faïences parlantes*, however, had a very brief period of great popularity in the mid-eighteenth century, when they were widely traded from Rouen.

Another example of such a plate was found at Fort Charlotte, at the western end of the Great Portage between Lake Superior and the Pigeon River in Minnesota (Wheeler et al. 1975, p. 89). Although only about half of the plate survives, the decoration and much of the inscription is clear. The decoration, both border design and the simple motif above and below the inscription, appears identical to that on the Tunica collection plate. The handwriting of the inscription is precisely the same style, down to the smallest flourish. It seems unquestionable that both plates were executed by the same hand, whether at Nevers, Rouen, or elsewhere (Quirielle 1877).* What remains of the inscription reads (Birk 1975, p. 82):

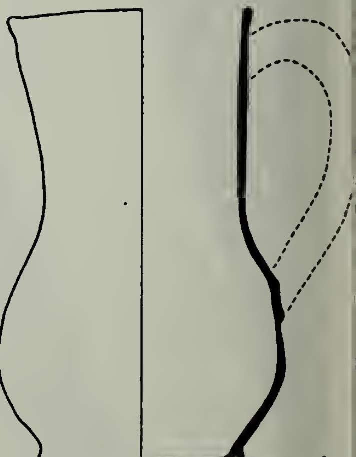
[*A*]u *fond de* ma *bouteille*
j'enferme cupidon
. . . *s le jus de la treille*
. . . n *tison*

and is translated:

At the bottom of my bottle
I imprison love,
For the juice of the grape
Makes my heart burn with passion



C-43



CV-750

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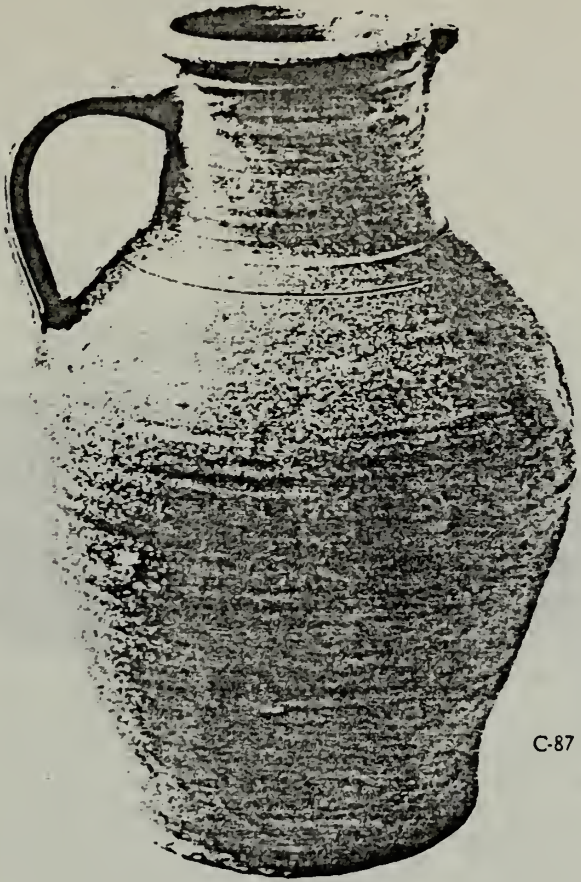
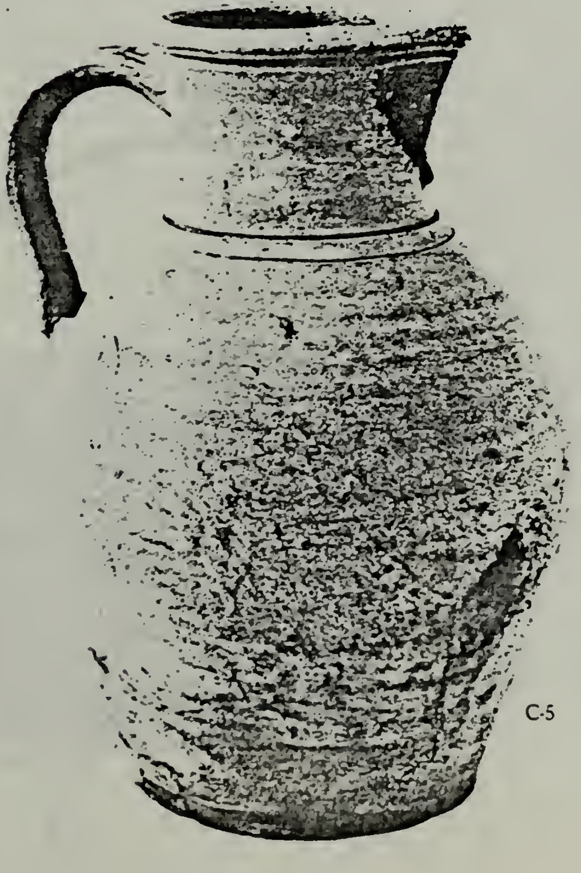
* A faience vessel, dated 1739, found in the vicinity of Mâcon exhibits a very similar style and decorative treatment (Tardieu 1964, fig. 445). Solely on the grounds of proximity, an origin at or near Nevers is suggested for all these pieces.



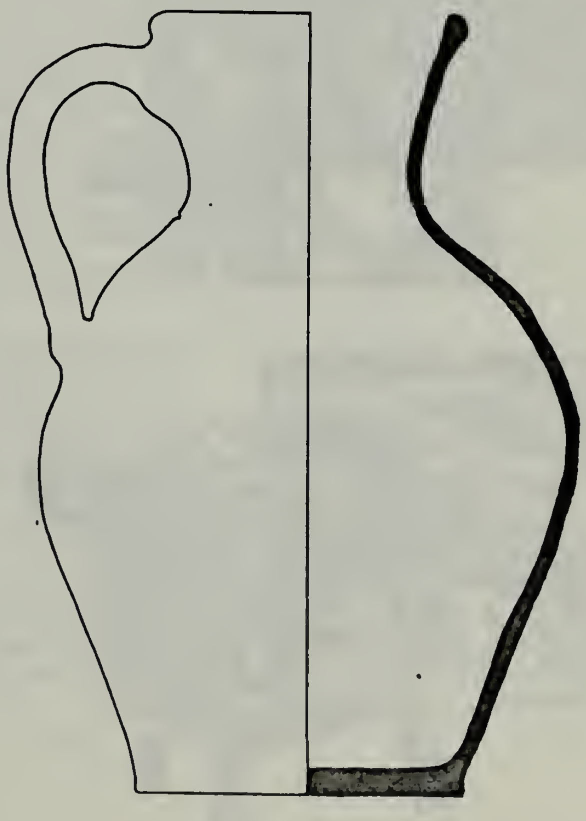
C-87

This pitcher and its companion piece (C-5) are typical of eighteenth-century French *pichets* (Vermette, Genêt, and Décarie-Audet 1974, p. 187). A similar pitcher has been identified from Place Royale, Quebec (L. Décarie-Audet, personal communication, 1978).

Pitcher C-5 is 30.4 cm high. It has a wide strap handle and a pair of wheel turned incised lines under the rim of the vessel and a pair on the shoulder. The vessel is almost identical in form to C-87. It is unglazed except for a patch of dark brown glaze beneath the spout of the vessel, which may have been an accident of the manufacturing process. More likely, however, it had a functional purpose: viz., serving as a place to set the lips without sticking when drinking directly from the pitcher.



C-5



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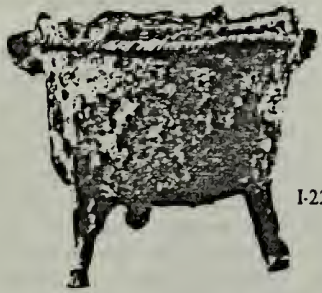
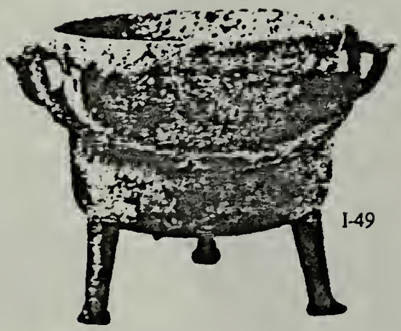
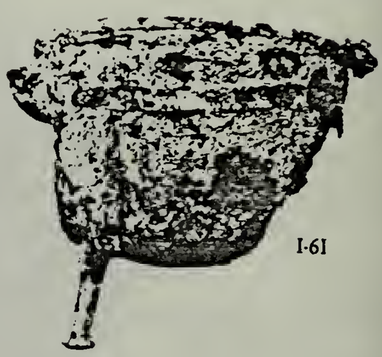
I-45



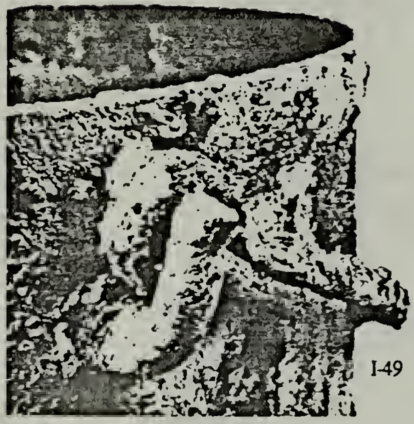
I-220



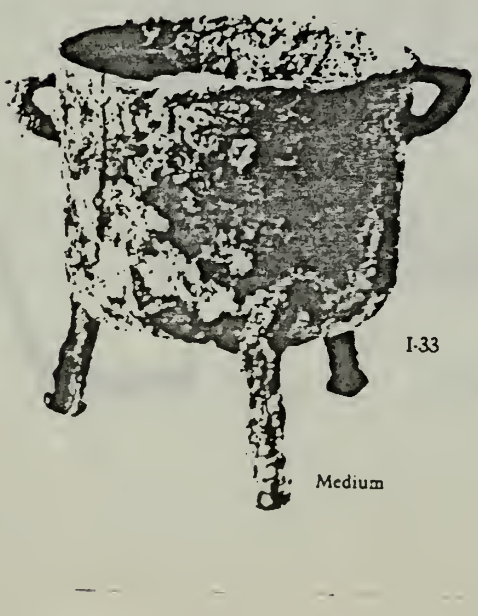
I-49



I-61

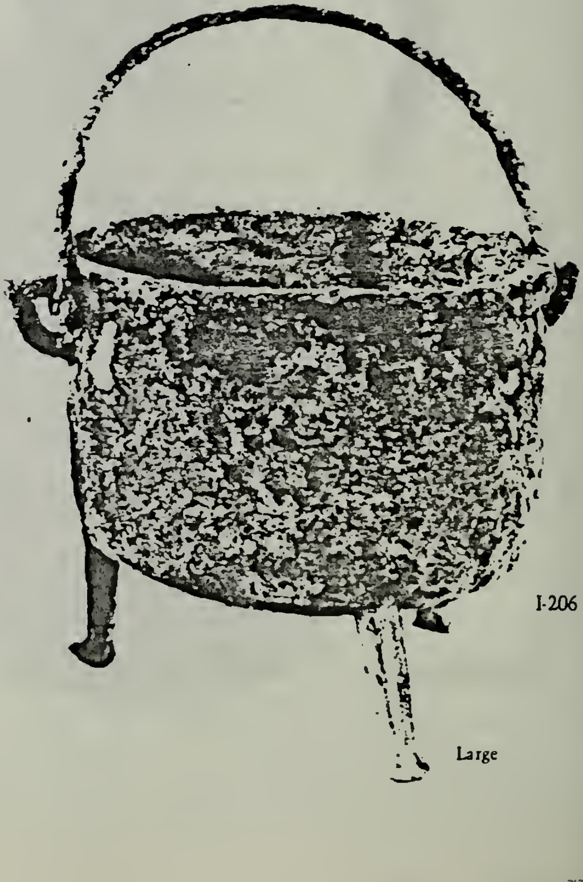


I-49



I-33

Medium



I-206

Large

Type A

Type A consists of 74 brass kettles. They range from 16.5 to 50 cm in diameter and have straight sides with flat or nearly flat bottoms. The sides slope outward slightly, and the rims are rolled and reinforced with iron. The bail ears are brass, and the bails are iron. One example, however, has a bail made of brass wire 7 mm in diameter, which appears to be a native-made replacement for the original iron bail.

As far as we can determine, all Type A kettles were made by the "battery" method (Wheeler et al. 1975, p. 58). In this process, circular brass disks were beaten into kettle shapes by machine; next, irregularities were smoothed out by pounding; finally, the rough kettles were mounted on a lathe to be smoothed and polished. Flaws created during manufacture were patched in the factory; thus, not all the patching observed on the Tunica vessels is the result of rough usage by the Indian. The comparatively fine repair job on some of the Variety 1 kettles illustrated (B-13, B-31) may be examples of factory patching.

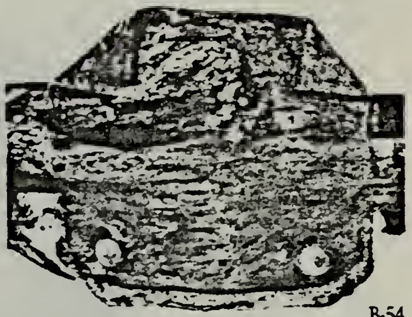
Variety 1. Variety 1 consists of 69 kettles. The bail ears are made of sheet brass which was folded over and placed astraddle the rims. The ears are secured with two copper rivets. To remove sharp angles, the upper corners on each ear were folded out and down and hammered flat. The degree of hammering and folding of the corners varies widely, and the resulting bail ears have outlines ranging from nearly rectangular to almost triangular.

Usually, Variety 1 kettles are undecorated; however, one Tunica example has bail ears made from a crudely incised sheet of brass (B-54), and two other examples have incised concentric circles on the interior of the bases and sides (e.g., B-150). In regard to the last two examples, Wheeler et al. note: "Each vessel displays a series of spiral marks about 5 mm apart on its interior. These lines were made during the manufacturing process" (1975, p. 57). That the marks are a regular result of the manufacturing process seems questionable because only 2 of the 98 kettles in the collection have them. Certainly, the marks were made during manufacture while the kettle was on the lathe, but they more likely represent an incidental decorative treatment.

Seventeen kettles of this variety, graduated in size, were found nested one inside another at Horsetail Rapids (ibid.). The Tunica examples have a very similar size range (table 11), although they also include three kettles larger than the largest of those found at Horsetail Rapids. If the Tunica Variety 1 kettles are arranged according to size gradation, it is immediately apparent that they, too, can be nested. Three complete sets of 18 nested kettles and 2 partial sets (one of 9 and one of 6 kettles of compatible sizes) make up the 69 kettles of Variety 1. If the kettles of this variety were acquired by the Tunica in complete sets, it would have required only a few trading visits to accumulate the large number of nesting kettles in the collection.

Similar kettle fragments and bail ears are known from a number of eighteenth-century French contact sites: Haynes Bluff (Brain 1975a, fig. 6), Bell (Wittry 1963, fig. 12), Horsetail Rapids (Wheeler et al. 1975, p. 57), Guebert (Good 1972, p. 167), Ada (Herrick 1958, fig. 5), Fort Michilimackinac (Stone 1974, p. 172), Old Birch Island Cemetery (Greenman 1951, pl. 17, fig. a), Rosebrough Lake (Miroir et al. 1973, p. 130), Chota (Gleeson 1970, p. 66), Mobile Bay (Stowe 1975, p. 71, fig. 6), Zetrouer (Goggin et al. 1949, p. 49), and Angola Farm (Quimby 1966, fig. 13, lower left-hand corner). This variety of kettle has also been recovered from the wreck of the *Machault*, which was scuttled in 1760 (Woodhead 1978).

This type of kettle and bail ear appears to have been in wide use in France in the eighteenth century, where it was repeatedly depicted in paintings, for example, Greuze's *La Paresseuse Italienne*, *La Blanchisseuse*, and *L'Accordée de Village*, all probably painted before 1761, and Chardin's *La Fontaine de Cuivre* (1740) and *Ustensiles de Cuisine et Oeufs* (about 1765). Also, probable examples of this variety are represented in Chardin's *La Raie* (about 1728), *Der Kupferkessel* (about 1732), *L'Ecureuse* (1738), *Marmite et d'Autres Objets* (about 1762), and an undated still life (p. 39).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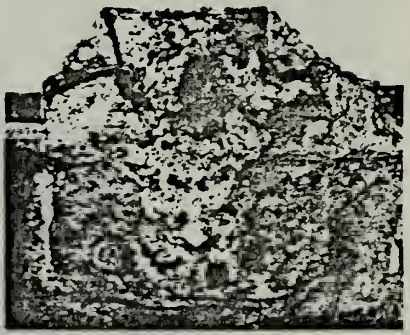
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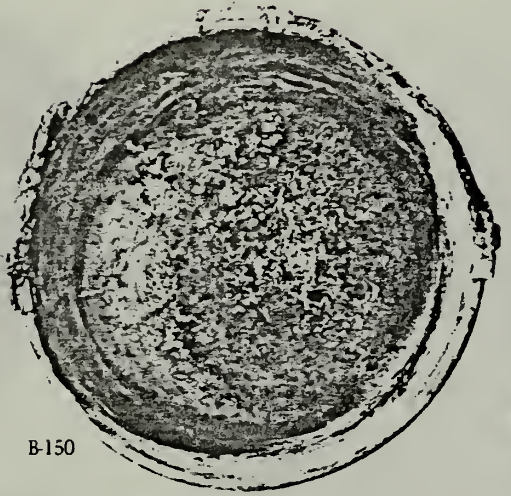

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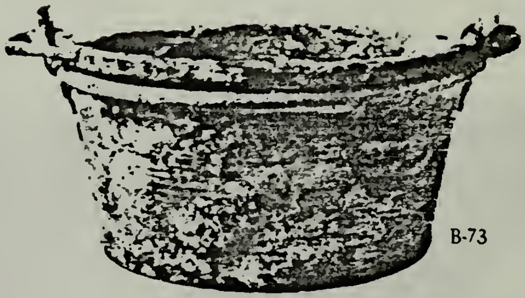

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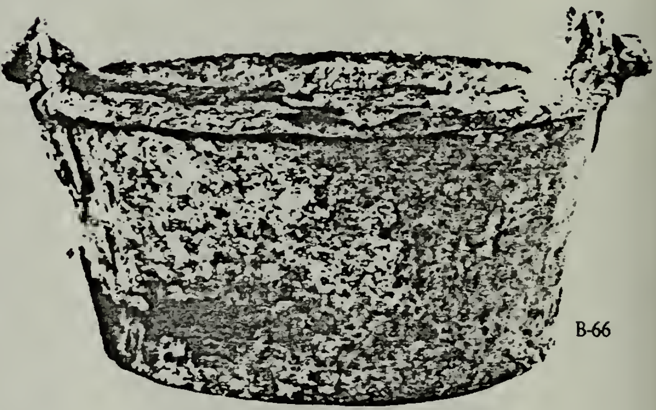

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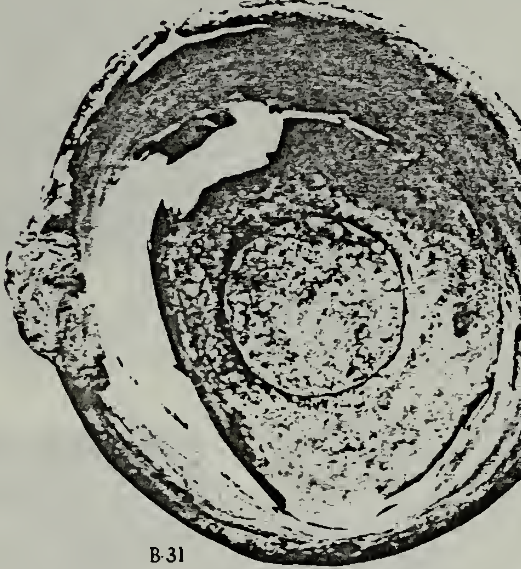

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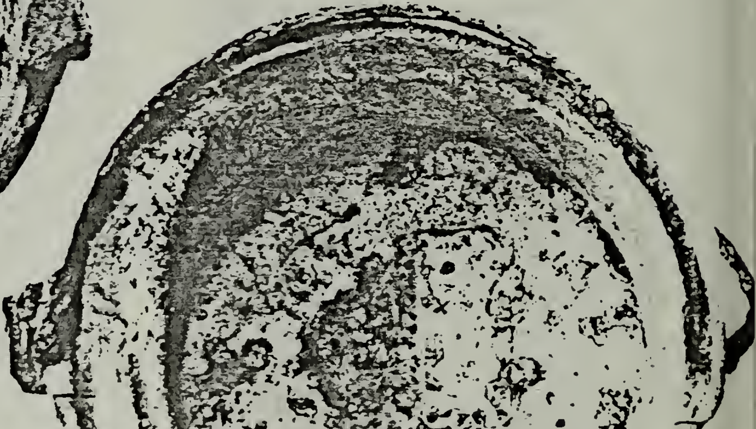

B-13

Type F

Type F includes 15 kettles which have straight sides. The most diagnostic feature, however, is a sharply defined shoulder from which rise a slightly restricted neck and mouth. The rims are rolled and iron reinforced. The bails are iron. These kettles range from 22 to 28 cm in rim diameter. Two varieties are distinguished.

Variety 1. Thirteen kettles are included in this variety, all of which are made of sheet copper. In manufacture, the bottom and sides probably were separate pieces which were joined by the "tabbed seam technique sealed by brazing" (Woodhead 1978). Originally, all of the kettles were tinned on the interior surfaces (clearly marking them as cooking vessels), although now only traces of the tin remain on most examples. The distinctive bail attachments are made of iron in the form of a ring mounted on a base plate which is secured below the shoulder with copper rivets. The diameters of the rims of these vessels range from 22 to 27.5 cm. Ten of these kettles have hammered designs on the bottoms and sides. Similarly decorated vessels are not known from other sites,* although several types of vessels in the Tunica collection are so ornamented (see Type E kettles and skillets).

Bail ears similar to those of this variety are known from Fort Michilimackinac (Stone 1974, fig. 94c, d), and an entire kettle is in the collections of the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology (Vincas P. Steponaitis, personal communication, 1974). Similar, if not identical, kettles have been recovered from the wreck of the French frigate *Machault*, which was scuttled in 1760 (Woodhead 1978).

Originally, these unusually shaped kettles probably were compound artifacts intended to be accompanied with lids, or covers, which fit down over the necks and rested on the shoulders. Other types of vessels illustrating this idea are known as "camp kettles" (e.g., see Wheeler et al. 1975, p. 63; Herrick 1958, fig. 11). Actual support for this theory in the Tunica collection is provided by a partial kettle with a cover corroded in place (B-96). The cover appears to have been multifunctional. It has an attachment for a single long handle and could have been used as a skillet. Other examples in the collection are described as such below, but their probable functional association with this variety of kettle should not be overlooked. Together, they may have formed a sort of basic mess kit.

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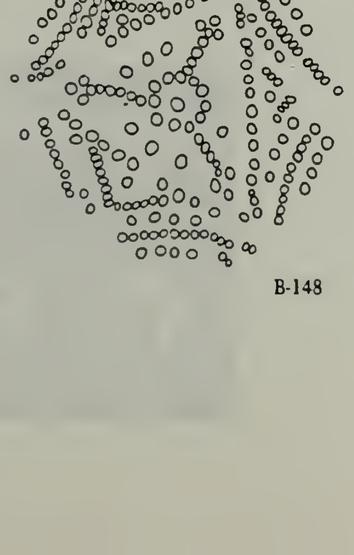
* As this volume went to press, an example was discovered on the grounds of the Louisiana State Prison Farm at Angola. This location was inhabited by the Tunica before their move to Trudeau (Brain 1977). Thus, the Tunica connection is still secure (see comments under "Skillets," p. 181), although the dating for these kettles now would seem to be in the earlier range.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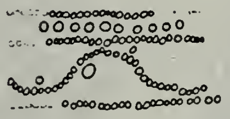
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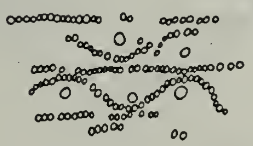
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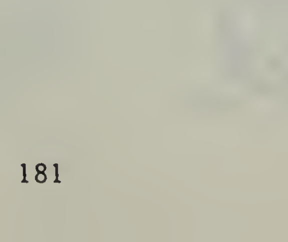
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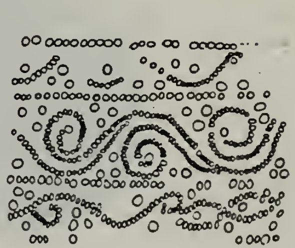
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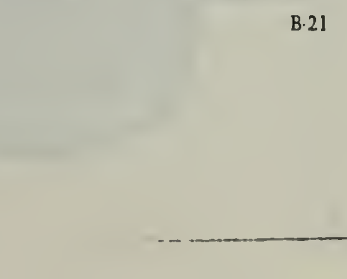
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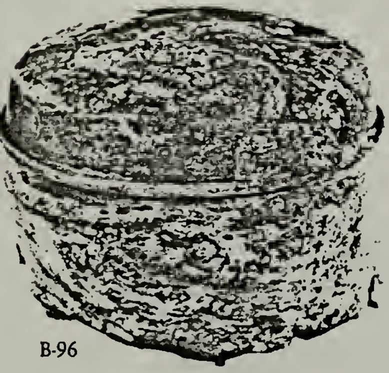
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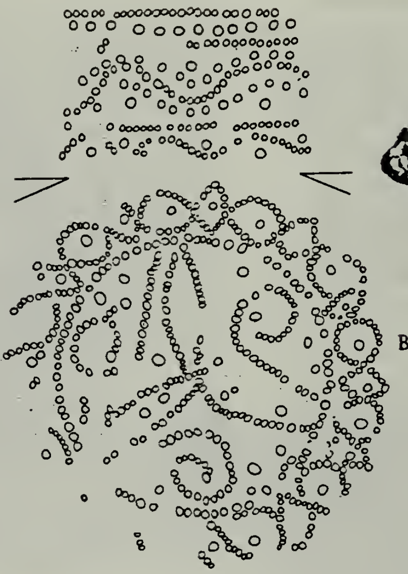

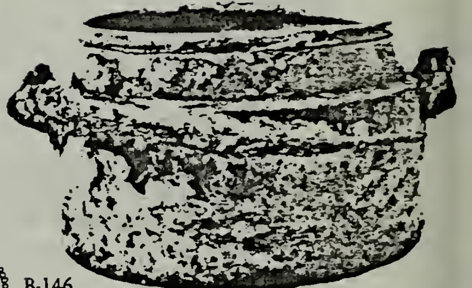
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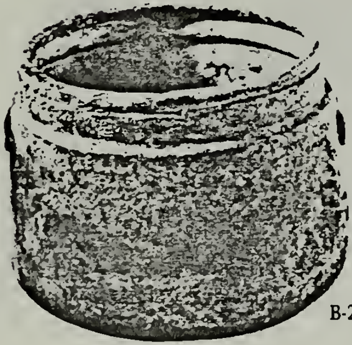
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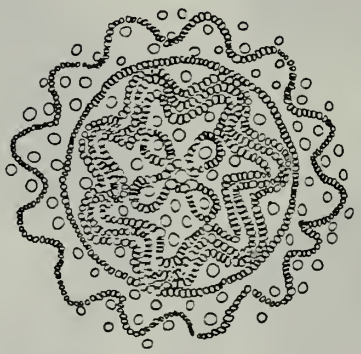

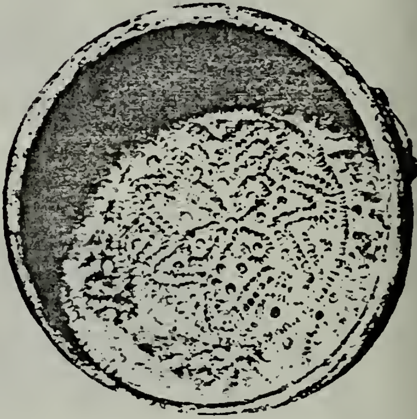

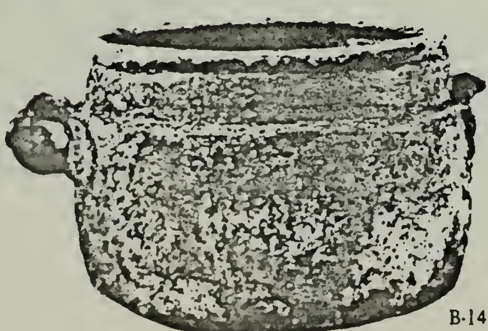
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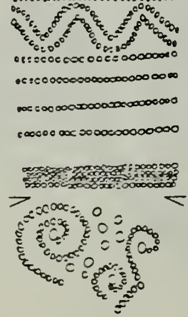

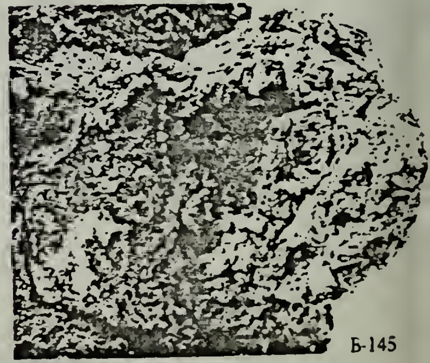
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PART VIII FOODWAYS

FOODWAYS

Ruth Fontenot

History

The history of the first hundred years of the settlement of Acadia and French Canada, as well as the first English-Scotch-Irish settlements of the seventeenth century reveals the origins of our Canadian ancestors, and gives us definite clues as to the beginnings of what we in Louisiana call "Cajun" food. The various ancient French principalities had by the year 1600 evolved into distinct and separate entities, each having a great many local and regional variations and specialties in the food culture. These furnish the background for what has become one of North America's most interesting and unique cuisines - Louisiana Cajun Cooking - with special emphasis on the descendants of those earliest settlers of the "County of Cadie, of Canada".

Using their already well-developed taste for fine food as well as hearty, robust country cooking, these poineers adapted to the "New France" "New Scotland" "Nova Scotia" and in their environment created uses for newly discovered food products, and revised some of their inherited and accumulated food lore.

The French colonists of Acadia were given a warm welcome by the great chief of the Mic Mac Indians, Membertou, and it was only with his help that the first group of settlers survived the severe winters for the first few years of their life in "New France". Besides the rigorous cold, scurvy, worst enemy of the pioneers, took a number of lives. The Mic Mac Indians were part of the large Algonquin Tribe or family of North America, which formerly occupied more territory than any other group on this continent. Their territory extended from the eastern shore of New Foundland to the Rocky Mountains, and from Churchill to Pamlico Sound. The name Mic Mac meant "at the place of spearing fish and eels".

In 1605 Dupont Gravé returned to France with a considerable number of valuable furs that he had obtained in trading with the Indians, and came back with needed equipment for the new colonists on the "Jonas", leaving for Rochelle in the spring. With him he brought more workmen, essential tools, seed grains, and cattle. Thus began the agricultural development of Acadia.

The Mic Mac Indians were in great part agricultural, growing corn (maize), beans, pumpkins, tobacco, and other crops. From them and from other branches of the Algonquins, the Acadians learned to make hominy, succotash, samp (corn meal mush), maple sugar, johnny cake, and many other native dishes. Corn and beans were boiled together and mixed with pieces of fish or meat. Roots and nuts were sometimes added to these mixtures, as well as herbs. Topinambours (ground artichokes), acorns, chestnuts, walnuts, and various seeds were added to the potages.

Maize was pounded and sifted and made into bread, which was baked in ashes. Fishing and hunting from the abundant wildlife around them provided them with an almost limitless supply of meat, which they roasted, boiled or smoked and dried.

By the third winter, the colonists were in better circumstances, and in 1607 Poutrincourt made another trip to France, leaving his friend chief Membertou and his tribe of Mic Macs to help guard the establishment at Port Royal.

After many difficulties and intrigues at the French court, Poutrincourt managed to get his affairs together and arrange for some new financing, with new backers for his enterprise in the New World. On July 28, 1610 young Charles de Biencourt was sent back to France by his father, de Poutrincourt, to obtain more provisions with which to revitalize the embryo colony. After many difficulties at court, young de Biencourt received aid from Antoinette de Pons, Marcuise de Guerchville, a lady-in-waiting to Catherine de Medici, who provided him with the necessary funds. She had become interested in the conversion of the Indians, and guided Jesuit-Father Pierre Biard, she gave her financial support to the colony.

Sailing on the "Grace de Dieu", young de Biencourt left France on January 26, 1611, accompanied by his mother, Jeanne de Salazor, Fathers Massé and Biard, and thirty-six men. The crossing was long and difficult, and they arrived at Port Royal May 22, 1611. En route, because of the lengthy journey, they had been forced to consume some of the food destined for the colony. Poutrincourt and his colonists had spent the long, hard winter again surviving only with the help of the ever-friendly Mic Macs. Lacking seed corn, they had cultivated topinambours, whose edible roots are still eaten by present-day "Cajuns". Thus this may be considered the first native crop to be raised by the French in the New World.

Determined to destroy the French settlements on the Atlantic seaboard, English Captain Samual Argall attacked Port Royal in October of 1613, while the colonists were working in a field 5 or 6 miles away. He seized all of their cattle and most of their provisions, and set fire to their homes. Without the help of the Mic Macs, the colony would again have been lost. Fortunately a cornmill built high on the river had escaped destruction. The colonists hastily rebuilt their homes before the enset of winter, and lived on wild game, fish and fowl, Topinambours, and other edible indiginous products intoduced to them by the faithful and friendly Indians.

The Acadians cooked in the style of their French heritage, and it is from these, their natal regions of France, that the Acadian cooking evolved. Normandy, Brittany, Touraine, Saintonge, Berry, Poitou, and the Limousin - ancient provinces of France - were the homes of most of these first settlers of Acadia. Theirs was in the main not the urban cuisine of Paris, but the more sturdy, regional cooking of provincial France.

Into the New World they brought cattle, sheep, swine, poultry - the basis of their former diet. New World corn and Old World wheat were staples. They found new vegetables and brought seeds and cuttings from the Old World.

Cattle furnished meat as well as their basic milk, butter, cream, and cheese as well as leather. Sheep furnished meat, and fabric for winter warmth. Pigs gave a whold abundance of the familiar French charcuterie cooking, with lard and leather as necessary by-products. Geese, chickens, and ducks gave them meat, eggs, and treasured feathers and down for bedding.

Many of our "Cajun" dishes famous today, such as andouille, boudin, hot chourice, sausages, ponce bourrée - as well as roux, sauces and gravies, are all products of centuries of French cooking.

Our Cajun seafood dishes - courtbouillions, bisques, étouffées - these are a direct heritage from the coastal regions of France where seafood is so abundant, and from inland streams that wind through the interior.

New dishes such as gumbo, jambalaya, and other typical "Cajun" fare were created in the New World. From close and constant contact with the life-saving Indians, the colonists were introduced to wild rice, buckwheat, topinambours, many culinary and medicinal herbs, numerous vegetables and fruit of exotic variety and taste, all of which inspired dishes that became "Acadian."

After the grand derangement, and subsequent migration to Louisiana of a number of the exiles, a whole gamut of new foods appeared in the Cajun repertoire. Many foods native to the Deep South and the Louisiana Delta country had been unknown in Canada. Gradual acculturation had already taken place in Louisiana, for the Spanish, French, and Negroes had proceeded the Acadians by half a century. A Creole cuisine had begun to develop, singular in the New World.

Adapted from the haute cuisine of Paris as well as the provinces and colonies of France and Spain, the lore of African slaves and free men of color from the Caribbean, Louisiana Creole cooking was in wonderful and interesting contrast to the cooking of the English settlements of the Atlantic seaboard.

The "Cajun Cooking" of Louisiana developed in the later part of the eighteenth century to the present day. It evolved in Southwest Louisiana, a triangle with its apex at the center, below Alexandria, La. radiating to east and west and forming a broad base at the Gulf of Mexico. Most of the Acadians settled in rural areas, away from urban centers. Cajun cooking in the prairies began to vary from that of the River and Bayou settlements, while the coastal regions produced other variations. Each area and community began to develop its own "specialties" - altogether they formed a blend that became a most individual and unique cuisine.

Modest and unpretentious, the Cajuns played as hard as they worked, and when work time was over and recreation began, food was a major part of every celebration, large or small.

Today, "Cajun cooking" has been discovered by the rest of America and like wildfire, has caught on and been recognized as a prime regional style. Now in vogue in resturants all over the U.S.A., garlic, onions, red pepper, and filé gumbo have hit the scene.

"Jambalaya, crayfish pie, filé gumbo" have become familiar lyrics and now familiar foods to many Americans, who are enjoying the spicy, hot flavors developed in the New World by past and present day practitioners of Cajun cooking at its best. Years of adaptations and make-do have resulted in a recognizable, and climactic regional food style that is unique in North America.

Basic Food Supply

The basic food supply of the Acadians began with food that they carried from their homes on the long ship journey to their destination. These were mainly staples easily transported by sea. After several trips from France to Acadia and back, they had brought from France their domesticated cattle, sheep, pigs, geese, ducks, and chickens, and seeds for planting.

Wild game was abundant in the New World. Venison, beaver, bear, moose, otters, raccoons, and other mammals provided them with flesh as well as fat and fur. Whales, sea lions, and seals may also be added to this list. Ducks, geese, turkey, and all manner of birds were plentiful.

Seafood varied with the seasons. Swordfish, sturgeon, porpoise, cod, haddock, halibut, pollock, salmon, trout, herring, shad, perch, bass, mackeral, flounder, eel, plaice, turbot, whitefish, catfish, smelt, pike, and may varieties of shellfish, lobsters and crabs were plentiful. Huge shell deposits at all tidewater regions testify to the extensive consumption of shellfish. Great supplies of these were eaten fresh, or cured by drying in the sun or over fires.

Many of the vegetables used by the early colonists were cultivated by the Indians: beans, peas, potatoes, squash, punpkins, melons. Roots and greens were gathered in the wild, as were berries, fruit and nuts.

Grain used by the early colonists was primarily maize, the great staple of the Indians. There was also wild rice, buckwheat, and other edible seeds. In a few years the colonists were growing their own large crops of wheat. Grainaries for storage were among the original structures built by the settlers, who found that Indians had learned to build storage facilities of their own. An interesting note here is that the colonists found the Indians not only drying and smoking food for future use, but also freezing it.

For seasoning, there were numerious varieties of pepper, herbs were gathered in the wild and later cultivated, salt was dried from the sea, or from salt springs. The French soon brought garlic pods for planting, and onions were first gathered in the wild and later cultivated.

Wine was brought over by the early missionary priests and officers, and "Tafia" from the Caribbean was in constant use on early ships, where sailors were always given a daily ration of grog, rum, or whatever was carried along for this purpose.

When the Acadians migrated to Louisiana, they found another range of foodstuffs for use, and developed through acculturation with the Southwest Indians, slaves, and the Spanish and French settlers who had preceeded them to this part of "New France".

Okra brought from Africa by early slaves became one of the basic ingredients of a truly original Creole-Cajun cuisine - gumbo, in all of its variations. Sassafras leaves cured and pounded added another ingredient to the thickening process of gumbo, and an extra touch of flavoring.

Cayenne peppers and jalapena peppers were soon adopted by the Acadians, who had a much heavier use of these hot flavorings and seasonings than their Creole counterparts.

The Cajun's couche-couche was developed from African cous-cous. Sweet potatoes, a great favorite of modern-day Cajuns, came from South America, where it was a basic food source of the Incas. As its use came up from Peru to Central America and the southwest part of Spanish America. The sweet potato, or Puerto Rican yam, was one of the early foods that the Acadians began planting and using in Louisiana.

The so-called "Irish" potato, also a native of the New World, was another staple crop from Canada to South America, and was more in use by Canadian settlers, Acadians, and New England colonists than its Puerto Rican cousin.

Crawfish was another "crop" that came to be almost symbolic of Cajun cooking as we know it today. Turtles, both sea turtles and fresh water varieties were plentiful in Louisiana, and were in great use by early French, Canadian and later Acadian settlers of Louisiana.

Cornbread and wheatbread, batter cakes, biscuits, muffins, and the whole gamut of baking dishes were always a staple of European cooking, and continued to be a part of the basic diet of the colonists.

The boucherie cooking of the Old World was brought to the New World, and in Acadiana came to full flower. An incredible array of boucherie cooking borrowed directly from France developed in Louisiana by the country Cajuns. City dwellers had markets, butchers, and shops. The rural Acadian settlers took turns making boucherie, forming groups that alternated this regular routine process of slaughtering beef, pork, and occasionally sheep. A coup de main, where everyone had his job to do, male and female, adults and children all took part in the communial boucheries.

The wonderful results of a boucherie besides the trimmed protions of meat, were sausages, boudin, both red and white, ponce bourrée, hams, bacon, fromage de tête de cochon, cracklings, and so on.

The basic food prepared by the Acadians was in the beginning and still remains simple, earthly, robust cooking. The food supply was elemental - nature's bounty, from earth, air, and water, and plain, ordinary grains and vegetables, supplanted by native seeds, nuts and berries. It is the addition of a creative use of seasonings, a flair for that extra something that livens up the ordinary and makes it extraordinary, that separates the Acadian cuisine from the Creole. There is no pretention, no préciosité in Cajun food. A potato looks like a potato. The appeal is mainly to the palate, with little or no attempt to deceive by appearance.

Herbs and Spices

All important to "Cajun cooking" is the use of herbs and spices. Above all other ingredients, these are what set it apart from the mainstream of ordinary "American" foods and give it the added piquancy and zest that make it so distinctive. Yet the range of herbs and spices used in everyday Cajun food is basically a rather simple and restricted one.

Seasoning with red (cayenne) pepper, black pepper, onions and garlic, sage and thyme, a good Cajun cook can whip up almost anything and have it tasty. Green onions and parsley are next in importance, and for gumbo - filé. In recent years, we have learned to use a wider variety of both herbs and spices, and these can enhance the flavor and tease the taste buds. Bay leaves have always been a must for sauces, gravies, and gumbo, as well as soup and stock. Bell peppers and celery have become part of most everyday cooking in these days of supermarkets and rapid transit. but they were a luxury in the "old" days, unless seasonal.

Some of the "herbs" that we use in Cajun cooking, such as filé (leaves of the sassafras tree) or bay (leaves of the laurel) come from trees, rather than true herbs.

Of all of the spices now available for modern-day cooking, black pepper was the one most used by ancient Acadians, and is still a treasured basic element of Cajun cuisine.

The late Caroline Dorman in her two books on Wild Flowers of Louisiana and Flowers Native to the Deep South has listed a long and interesting array of edible plants native to this region, consumed and used for both food and medicine.

Most of these were in use by the Indians, who passed their food lore on to the European settlers. It is to them that we owe thanks for the knowledge of the use of file', ground or powdered dried leaves of the sassafras tree, gathered in the last full moon of August. This distinctive flavoring and thickening agent gives body to one of Louisiana's most celebrated dishes, gumbo. The root of the tree was used for a refreshing drink - a Tisane for "thinning the blood".

"Red pepper" - cayenne, capsicum - a great range of pepper plants are native to America, and are certainly a major herb in Cajun Food. In use by the Indians of central and southwest America, they were soon adopted for everyday use by thrifty Cajuns, who grew and "powdered" their own, and pickled them in vinegar for "hot sauce".

Today, many Acadians use and occasionally grow a wide variety of Eurasian herbs and spices in their cooking - coriander, matjoram, oregano, basil, cumin, allspice, cloves, and anise - a full range of seasonings available on the spice rack.

Ordinary "Cajun" herbs and spices are neither expensive nor exotic. Except for black pepper, you can grow your own!

a. Culinary

1. "Jack-in-the-Pulpit", "Indian Turnip". Arisaema triphyllum. Edible tuber. (p.8)
2. "Water Chinquapin", "Monoconut". Nelumba lutea. Wild lotus, edible seeds. (p.49)
3. Dentaria laciniata. Mustard family, edible leaves. (p.53)
4. "Ground Nut". Apios apios, apios tuberosa. Roots tasting like peanuts, highly prized by the Indians. (p.65)
5. "Candy root". Polygulaceae. Edible roots tasting like wintergreen. (p.68)
6. "Spurge-Nettle", "Bull-Nettle". Enidoscolus texanus. Black seeds with nut-like flavor. (p.69)
7. "May-Pop". Passiflora incarnata. Edible fruit. (p.77)
8. "Prickly Pear". opuntia humifusa. Rose colored fruit eaten by Indians, available in markets in San Antonio. In the Cane River area, there is an almost black variety. (p.79)
9. "Midden Morning Glory". Ipomea macrorhiza. Edible root found on most Indian middens, hence the name. (p.96)
10. "Blue Sage". Salvia azurea. Leaves used for seasoning. (p.111)
11. "Purple Bergamot", "Horse Mint". Monardia fistulosa. Minty leaves used for seasoning. (p.111)
12. "Lemon Mint". Melissa officinalis. Lemon-flavored minty leaves. (p.112)

13. "Mountain Mint". Koellia flexuosum (pycanthemum flexuosum). Leaves used for seasoning. (p.112)

14. "White Mint". Koellia ineana (pycanthemum ineana). Leaves used for seasoning. (p.112)

15. "False Dandelion". Sitilias Caroliniana. Edible leaves. (p.157)

16. "Dandelion". Taraxacum taraxacum. Edible leaves. (p.158)

17. "Chicory". Cichorum intibus. Edible leaves and roots. (p.158)

b. Medicinal

1. "Colic Root", "Aloe". Aletris farinosa. Medicinal root. (p.24)

2. "Mayapple", "Mandrake". Podophyllum peltatum. Medicinal root. (p.24)

3. "Blood Root". Sanguinaria canadensis. Root produces a red dye used by the Indians. (p.50)

4. "Goat's Rue". Cracca virginiana. Medicinal tisane made from leaves (spring tonic). (p.59)

5. "Coral Bean", "Mamou". Erythrina herbacca. Medicinal root, used for coughs "sirop de mamou". Indians used red beans for beads.

6. "Button-Snake Root". Eryngium acquaticum, erynguim guccafolium. Root prized by Southwest Indians for medicine and charms.

7. "Mullein". Verbascum Thapsus. Leaves steeped and used as a "tisane". (p.113)

8. "Wild Sugar", "Heart Leaves". Hexastylis arifolia, asarum arifolia. Aromatic leaves used as a heart stimulant, used by the Indians. Flower beneath surface of the ground. (p.125)

9. "Boneset". Eupatorium perfoliatum. Medicinal use by the Indians. (p. 131)

Food Related Sports and Activities

Hunting

From the first advent of French settlers to the New World, hunting has been a prime activity, in the beginning out of sheer necessity. Included in "hunting", we place "trapping", which was also a primal method of obtaining food and one much practiced by the Acadians. Early chronicles indicate that the Indians had devised numerous snares and other devices for capturing both large and small animals, long before the European settlers arrived on this continent.

Hunting provided the early settlers on the their main sources for food fupply, with an abundant and seemingly inexhaustible array of wild game available year round. In sheer quantity, the range of wild game was amazing to the French, whose own European wildlife was already beginning to dwindle as their native habitats were more and more invaded by the multiplying population.

Hunting today is one of the most popular and pervasive of "Cajun" activities, and still provides the modern descendant of the Acadians with food for his table, as well as outdoor recreation in a world growing much more confining and limiting as time goes on.

Camps are commonplace extra homes for city dwellers, and we see them lined up along wooded areas or quiet streams where wild game still roams free. Access to protected hunting areas and game reserves still enables today's Cajun to have his sauce piquantes and gumbos and potages with the extra flavor of wild game. The great Atchafalàya swamp is gradually silting up and being drained and cultivated, but it is still the source of much of the wildlife in Acadiana. The great Opelousas prairie that extends west of the old Mississippi River escarpment known as the Grand Coteau ridge still has open spaces and hedgerows where the haunting sound of doves can be heard, and the shrill whistle of the "bob-white" as he calls his mate. A few lonesome eagles still soar in secluded flight, and a few bears still roam in the deep woods.

Trappers still catch wildlife in the dense swamps, at the edges of Louisiana's great salt domes, and live in quiet seclusion much as their forefathers did. But these are a vanishing breed.

Fishing

While the land animals have slowly been disappearing from Louisiana as the population grows and spreads, the supply of fish is still fairly plentiful. Although many lakes and streams have become polluted, there may still be found bayous and rivers and inland lakes where fishing is the prime activity of the outdoor man (and woman!). Inland waterways lace through Acadiana, and a network of streams winds to the coastal areas, and ultimately to the bays of Louisiana's costal region, and to the Gulf which is its lower border.

Seafood has always been a specialty of French chefs, and has certainly become a specialty of the Louisiana "Cajun". In Nova Scotia, which was first discovered by adventurous fishermen from across the Atlantic, the supply of the fish from lakes, streams and the ocean provided our Acadian ancestors with a means of survival.

Today's Acadians are able to enjoy seafood more than any other inhabitants of this U. S. of A. Louisiana provides one-third of the nation's supply of seafood, and it is still abundant. Today's rice farmers have begun harvesting crawfish and catfish as well as grain. "Turtle farms" are fairly common on the Atchafalaya basin. The commercial and sports fishermen of Louisiana are harvesting the bounty of the sea, and have learned to cook seafood as none other.

Along Bayou Portage is a string of "camps" where a lazy fisherman can drop his line off the deck of his camp and catch his meal without leaving home. Along Bayou Pierre Part, every house that fronts on the water has a boat and a landing of some sort, be it only a pier or tree for tying up. Bayou LaFourche and many others are much the same. Most of the lower part of Acadian country is fishing oriented.

The quantity of seafood restaurants in Southwest Louisiana is another testimonial to the abundance of our seafood, and our appetites for it. Seafood restaurants proliferate everywhere, not only on lakefronts and rivers, but in small towns and communities everwhere.

Many a "fish fry" has been held in Cajun country, where catfish and French fries, courtbouillons, gumbos, étouffées and bisques are a part of everyone's everyday living.

Family Fêtes and Holidays

Family

The Acadian settlers were strongly family oriented: close-knit units of grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren all being found in communal settlements, with cousins and in-laws making even more complex related groups. Listings of the early settlers of Acadia indicate that this was the norm.

Still common in Louisiana Cajun country is the family settlement pattern, and whole areas and communities are all closely related and intertwined. Genealogical studies reveal the intermarriages and the abstracts of successions show the land distribution into close family groups.

Family Fêtes and holidays were therefore drawn from these tightly woven units, and celebrations of births, weddings, and funerals are still occasions that bring more scattered relatives together. Funerals in particular seem to bring out hordes of relatives, who take these times to catch up on family news, gossip, sizing up, politics, farm activities, and the like.

All family "Fêtes and Holidays" take on the aspect of celebrations, from birth to death. And food is a most important part of these happenings. In most family celebrations and gatherings, the ladies assign to each one certain dishes to prepare, and the men usually take over the outdoor cooking, such as crawfish boils, fish fries, gumbos and barbeques.

Weddings will be the occasion for an unlimited variety of cakes, cookies, and candies, much to the delight of the sweet-toothed children. Priding themselves on being famous for special and original recipes, the women in particular outdo themselves cooking up their favorite dishes, and the guests all look forward to pralines or custard pies.

Jambalaya is a favorite at many of these parties, requiring only a fork for eating, and being made of whatever happens to be plentiful or handy, and so easy for serving to a crowd.

Fifty years ago, the men were usually served first at these parties, while ladies brought our their dishes proudly, and ate later with the children (who occasionally had to be fed early to keep from getting too rambunctious). Today is a different story, with everyone seated together, the children usually at small, separate tables.

Beer, rather than hard liquor was the rule, lemonade or punch for the ladies - but often the men would slip surreptitiously behind a barn where a jug of homemade sour mash or white lightning was stashed away.

For more quiet occasions, cherry bounce might be served to small seated indoor groups, and the fragrance of wild cherries floated in the air. An old aunt had her private and secret recipe for rose geranium liqueur, which smelled like perfume and was insiduosly delicious.

Music was also a large part of all of these gatherings, and after the food was served, it was time for the fiddle and accordian and guitar and triangle to be brought out and for guests to dance off some of the surplus food. Music, happy and sad, bouncy and forlorn, for whatever the occasion.

Groups

Neighbors and groups bring out some interesting and productive activities that are food-related - all must eat!

There is the coup de main which can involve almost anything - a new roof, a fence, a church, something that needs painting. Neighbors and friends come to help, and naturally this involves a large pot of something to feed them. Gumbos, stews, sauce piquantes - long gravies with rice - these were regular fare and still are. The inevitable jambalaya, perhaps some fried chicken and potato salad - always something substantial and filling. Homemade bread, stovepans of cornbread and sweet potatoes were and still are old favorites. Backbone stew, another country speciality, always manages to hit the spot. Beans and cabbage cooked with petit salé or salt meat are also old regulars. Dessert might be big pans of coushaw cut into squares and baked, swimming in cane syrup and butter.

One of the prime group activities was the boucherie, which is disappearing from the scene. From pulling the fattened pig from his pen to eating the finished products of the boucherie, this is an occasion that is full of visual excitement, and ends up being a gourmet's paradise. Once a weekly occasion rotating in small communal groups in order to provide fresh meat, the boucherie can be fun. It once was a necessity, and hard work made pleasant by its communal aspect.

Butchering beef-meat was a regular weekly routine, and occasionally sheep and goats were barbecued. Ice-boxes, refrigèrators and deep freezes have made this group activity a fun-fest now, rather than a life- sustaining ritual. Similarly, the cochon de lait hung from a tree and rotated slowly over an open fire from dawn to midday is now a spectacle staged for city-folks to gawk at, and cameras to snap at. But still mighty good eating.

Religion

We mentioned christenings, weddings and funerals as occasions for food-fests, but must mention also a number of religion-related events that seem to bring our some of the best in Cajun cooking. Catholic schools and churches are the centers of much of rural and small-town Acadiana's social happenings. Church and school bazaars are well-known for their chicken and sausage dinners, gumbos, cake sales, and crayfish boils. Modern school bazaars even have drive-in or drive-up booths where you can pick up a fabulous feast without even getting out of the car, if you're not inclined to mingle with the noisy, milling crowd.

Special occasions involving the hierarchy of the church, Bishops and Archbishops and a whole retinue of clergy, also bring out some wonderful Cajun cooking for the chosen few. Ordinations and confirmations are the time when really serious Cajun gourmets chefs, male and female, get to work and produce some of their most spectacular successes. These are the few occasions that call for spotless linens, fine china, and crystal, wine and flowers as well as food.

Easter is a most particularly colorful occasion in Cajun country, with an egg-hunt, stemming from Pagan origins, followed by the traditional fighting of the eggs - gros bout and petit bout. The dying of the eggs is fun, and eating the ones that have cracked gives everybody a sensation of surreptitions pleasure. Stuffed eggs, egg salad sandwiches, and pickled eggs are inevitable consequences of Easter egg hunts. Easter egg stew is a particularly Cajun consequence. Guinea eggs (hard to crack and slightly sneaky) and goose eggs (giants) are the most sought after eggs for Easter, and carefully put aside for the special day.

Christmas is of course the children's favorite, and brings great family gatherings and tremendous quantities of food. Halloween is popcorn ball time, and pumpkin pie and pecan pie time. Candy and cake and pies and roasts and mountains of rice dressing, huge platters and trays of food are prepared for fall and winter religious holidays, always family oriented. New Years is more for grown-ups to veillé, sit up most of the night reminiscing and waiting to see what the New Year will bring, and what happened in the past one.

Patriotic

The Fourth of July was traditionally a political day in Acadiana, and still is in most of the triangle. This was the day for political candidates to announce for election or re-election to various positions, both local, parish-wide, regional and statewide. Since most Cajuns love politics, at least as a spectator sport and a conversational topic that never fails, the Fourth of July is best remembered for famous bons mots, speeches and incidents, and patriotic speeches were incidental. But food was again an intergral part of the whole, as was music - Cajun or Country and Western. There is usually food at every political gathering, and on these events, a foot-tapping band was and is a must. Political barbecues are a tradition all over the Acadiana region, and some of the bayou and river areas have giant fish-frys and gumbos in lieu of smoking or barbecuing meat. Hot dogs, hamburgers, and beer and soft drinks take their places alongside the regional cooking, and tend to make the gathering more democratic and catholic in taste, deferring to the occasional stranger who has ventured into the midst of Cajun country.

It is always fun to see the outsiders taking cautious tastes of the local specialities, then diving in and coming back for more. Sometimes hunters will come up with rabbit stews and squirrel sauce piquantes. Small bags of cracklings (gratons) are sold like bags of potato chips.

Cake, sliced up on paper napkins and crumbling as you eat on the run never tasted so good. Pralines made with raw sugar and small, fat, native pecans are a special treat.

Volunteer fire departments in small towns often have Memorial Day cookouts, and one of the memorable potages in St. Landry Parish was Hope, Hook and Ladder Co. #1's bouillie, made of débris (internal organs) cooked for hours and hours with fresh corn, tomatoes and onions into a thick and very tasty soup, usually served with hot French bread and lots of butter.

A Thanksgiving menu usually included the traditional turkey, but many an Acadian cook "stuffs" his turkey with garlic inserted into small pockets, and salt,red and black pepper pushed in alongside as one would season a pork roast. Instead of the more "American" mashed potatoes, rice dressing (unfortunately renamed in recent years "dirty rice") and baked sweet potatoes are standard fare. No pilgrims here (the Acadians and New England colonists were constantly at war) so Thanksgiving wasn't a big celebration until recent years, as old memories lingered on. We must remember it was Massachusetts Governor Shirley who began the Grand Derangement of the Acadians from Nova Scotia.

Bastille day is big in Creole New Orleans, but virtually ignored and unknown in Acadiana. After all, the Cajuns were in Louisiana by that time, and the Spanish were in charge.

Political celebrations are more local and provincial in character, with few national overtones, French or American.

Food and Harvest Festivals

Louisiana has an abundance of festivals year round, and a great many of these are focused on food. There are festivals for most of the major food crops in the state, and festivals for special dishes that are celebrated with gusto. Fairs of all kinds have food booths where local cooks prepare their favorite foods for special occasions. Some of the fairs and festivals are treats for gourmands who come from miles away to taste some chef's samples of their individual creations, each trying to outdo the other with his original ideas. No celebration is complete without the serving of the fabulous food for which the Louisiana Cajun has developed in his own style, with his own special flair. Cooking contests are often a part of festivals and fairs, and from these there is often created a unique dish.

Several "Cajun" festivals have been organized in recent years, and we list these also. Most of the fairs and festivals in Louisiana feature cooking as part of the celebration, and to accomodate the appetites of the fairgoers. A festival usually turns into a foodfest, no matter what!

a. Specific Crops or Products

1. Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival
Cameron, LA
January 8-10, 1987
Bonnie Conner, P.O. Box 19
Cameron, LA 70631
(318) 775-5718

2. Amite Oyster Day, Inc.
Amite, LA
March 20-21, 1987
Larry Reid, P.O. Box 1064
Amite, LA 70422
(504) 748-8500

3. Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival
   Ponchatoula, LA
   April 11-12, 1987
   Bobby Cortez, P.O. Box 762
   Ponchatoula, LA 70454
   (504) 386-6601

4. Louisiana Crawfish Festival
   St. Bernard, LA
   April 23-26, 1987
   Garland Smith, 3400 Veronica Drive
   Chalmette, LA 70043
   (504) 277-1137
5. Kentwood Dairy Queen's Pageant
   Kentwood, LA
   May 2, 1987
   Sandy Reed, P.O. Box 163
   Kentwood, LA 70444
   (504) 229-8973

6. Southeast Dairy Festival
   Hammond, LA
   May 2, 1987
   E.E. Puis, 310 Louisiana Ave.
   Hammond, LA 70401
   (504) 345-1524

7. Kentwood Dairy Festival
   Kentwood, LA
   June 4-6, 1987
   Diane Gill, P.O. Box AD
   Kentwood, LA 70444
   (504) 229-8607

8. Fourth Annual Okra Festival
   Kenner, LA
   June 6-7, 1987
   Donna Edwards, 624 Williams Blvd.
   Kenner, LA 70062
   (504) 468-7221

9. Louisiana Peach Festival
   Ruston, LA
   June 12-21, 1987
   Regina Atkins, P.O. Drawer 150
   Ruston, LA 71270
   (318) 255-2031

10. Louisiana Corn Festival, Inc.
    Bunkie, LA
    June 18-21, 1987
    Mrs. Jacque Nibert, P.O. Drawer 70
    Bunkie, LA 71322
    (318) 346-5792

11. Bayou LaCombre Crab Festival
LaCombre, LA
June 26-28, 1987
Marge Madere, P.O. Box 1573
LaCombre, LA 70445
(504) 882-5792

12. Louisiana Catfish Festival
Des Allemands, LA
July 11-12, 1987
Rev. Paul Lamberty, P.O. Draver G
Des Allemands, LA 70030
(504) 758-7542

13. Louisiana Oyster Festival
Galliano, LA
July 17-19, 1987
Beverly B. Eymard, P.O. Box 372
Galliano, LA 70354
(504) 632-2224

14. South Lafourche Seafood Festival
Galliano, LA
July 8-10, 1987
Kevin Bouffanie, Rt. 1 Box 331
Galliano, LA 70354
(504) 632-4633

15. Delcambre Shrimp Festival
Delcambre, LA
August 12-16, 1987
Jacqueline Toups, Box 286
Delcambre, LA 70528
(318) 685-2653

16. Gueydan Duck Festival
Gueydan, LA
September 3-6, 1987
Karen Woods, P.O. Box 179
Gueydan, LA 70542
(318) 536-6780

17. Louisiana Shrimp and Petroleum
Festival and Fair
Morgan City, LA
September 4-7, 1987
Benny Villa, P.O. Box 103
Morgan City, LA 70381
(504) 385-0703

18. Louisiana Soybean Festival
Jonesville, LA
September 18-20, 1987
Sherry Floyd, P.O. Box 597
Jonesville, LA 71343
(318) 339-8536

19. Rayne Frog Festival
Rayne, LA
September 18-20, 1987
Hilda Haure, P.O. Box 383
Rayne, LA 70578
(318) 334-2332

20. Louisiana Cattle Festival
Abbeville, LA
October 2-4, 1987
Anna Pierce, P.O. Box 28
Abbeville, LA 70511
(318) 893-4984 & 893-3540

21. Louisiana Cotton Festival
Ville Platte, LA
October 9-11, 1987
Mary Bergeron, 407 E. Magnolia St.
Ville Platte, LA 70586
(318) 363-4521

22. International Rice Festival
Crowley, LA
October 16-17, 1987
Bill Williams, P.O. Box 1900
Crowley, LA 70527
(318) 783-3067

23. International Alligator Festival
Franklin, LA
October 16-17, 1987
Lee Ann LeBlanc, 903 Anderson St.
Franklin, La.
(318) 783-3067

24. Louisiana Yambilee
October 19-25, 1987
Opelousas, LA
Janet Duplechin, P.O. Box 444
Opelousas, LA 70570
(318) 948-8848

25. Violet Oyster Festival
Violet, LA
October 35-25, 1987
Rev. Kenneth Ryan, P.O. Box 217
Violet, LA 70092
(504) 682-3046

26. Louisiana Swine Festival
Basile, LA
October 29 - November 1, 1987
Mary Jane "Snookie" Lejeune, P.O. Box 457
Basile, LA 70515
(318) 432-5437

27. Louisiana Pecan Festival
Colfax, LA
November 6-7, 1987
June Ingles, Rt. 1 Box 300
Dry Prong, LA 71432
(318) 640-2310

28. International Sugar Festival
New Iberia, LA
September 24-27, 1987
Sugar Festival Association, P.O. Box 2153
New Iberia, LA 70560
(318) 369-9323

29. Loreauville Harvest Festival
Loreauville, LA
November 21-22, 1987
Richard S. Berzas, P.O. Box 446
Loreauville, LA 70552
(318) 365-2867

30. Plaquemines Parish Fair and Orange Festival
Fort Jackson, LA
December 5-6, 1987
Mr. Wesley Arnoie or Miss Paula Cappielo, P.O. Box 309
Port Sulfer, LA 70083
(504) 564-2761; 564-2743

b. Specific Dishes

1. Louisiana Boudin Festival
Broussard, LA
Feburary 20-22, 1987
Richard Primeaux, 106 Rue de Canne
Broussard, LA 70518
(318) 837-4504

2. Louisiana Praline Festival
Houma, LA
May 1-3, 1987
Winston English or Patsy Leezy, P.O. Box 1066
Houma, LA 70361
(504) 876-2047

3. Jambalaya Festival
Gonzales, LA
June 12-14, 1987
J.C. Walker, P.O. Box 1243
Gonzales, LA 70737
(504) 644-3904

4. Calca-"Chew" Food Festival and Gumbeaux Gator "Tail Cook-off"
Lake Charles, LA
October 2-4, 1987
R. Patrick Diamond, 1105 17th St.
Lake Charles, LA 70394
(318) 439-4585

5. Raceland Sauce Piquante Festival
Raceland, LA
October 2-4, 1987
Kevin Prive, P.O. Box 526
Raceland, LA 70394
(504) 537-3204

6. The Gumbo Festival
Bridge City, LA
October 8-10, 1987
Rev. J. Anthony Luminais, P.O. Box 9069
Bridge City, LA 70094
(504) 436-4712

7. Sorrento Boucherie Festival
Sorrento, LA
October 9-11, 1987
J.M. Phillips, 10532 Savoy Rd.
St. Amant, LA 70774
(504) 675-8545

8. Louisiana Gumbo Festival of Chackbay
Chackbay, LA
October 16-18, 1987
Eddie Luquette, 918 Highway 20
Thibodaux, LA 70301
(504) 633-7302

9. Andouille Festival
La Place, LA
October 23-25, 1987
Frank Fagot, P.O. Box 206
La Place, LA 70068
(504) 652-2065 & 652-6098

10. French Food Festival
La Rose, LA
October 23-25, 1987
Ronald J. Pere, P.O. Box 602
La Rose, LA 70373
(504) 693-7355

11. Crawfish Etouffee Cook-Off Contest
Eunice, LA
March 29, 1987

c. Cajun Festivals

1. Mamou Cajun Music Festival
Mamou, LA
June 5-6, 1987
Paul C. Tate, Jr., P.O. Box 200
Mamou, LA 70554-0200
(318) 468-5555

2. Cajun Day Festival
Church Point, LA
September 12-13, 1987
Theresa Cary, 930 E. Venable St.
Church Point, LA 70525
(318) 684-2739

3. Festivals Acadiens
Lafayette, LA
September 19-20, 1987
Gerald Breaux, P.O. Box 52066
Lafayette, LA 70505
(318) 232-3737

4. Saint Andrew Cajun Festival
Amelia, LA
September 25-27, 1987
L. Landry or W. Chassaniol, P.O. Box 310
Amelia, LA 70340
(504) 631-2333

Cooking Methods and Equipment

Outdoors

In the winter of 1960, Dr. Fred Kniffen, then head of the Department of Geography and Anthropology at LSU, wrote an interesting article on "The Outdoor Oven in Louisiana", thereby preserving a record of a vanishing element of cooking in Louisiana, complete with photographs of a few existing ovens photographed in 1950.

These, he feels, were used for cooking wheat bread, and were similar to those in use in 16th century France. In and about San Antonio are a number of outdoor ovens built in the Spanish Mission Presidios, and these were built of stone, unlike the Louisiana earthen ovens, which were "oval or pear shaped in ground plan and arched or domed above" built of mud mixed with moss.

Much more common in more recent usage was the fireplace, where bread, cornbread, or biscuits were cooked indoors in a "Dutch oven". Most of us are familiar with "hoe" cakes, which were cornbread patties cooked in the coals of an outdoor fire on a hoe, used by outdoor garden workers or farmers while working the fields.

The Indians did most of their cooking outdoors, over open fires, smoking and curing meat, baking flat cakes on heated stoves. In the Caribbean, the word buccaneer developed from the French boucane, to smoke, to brown, to cook in the open air. From this came boucanier, one who smokes or dries or cures his meat or fish out-of-doors.

Indoors

Indoor hearths were in use in France as far back as the eleventh century, and the town of Lerné became famous for its "hearth-cakes". Rabelais gave a recipe for hearth-cakes (Gargantua XXXIII), and in a modern Larrousse Gastronomique, there is a recipe for Fouaces d'Auvergne, hearth-cakes of Auvergne.

Jean Palardy in his book on ancient Canadian furnishings, has illustrations of early fireplace tools and pots. In the mid-nineteentth century, hearth cooking was still fairly common in the Acadiana region, until wood burning cast-iron stoves became available and popular. Small kerosen stoves were used at the turn of the century, and with the advent of electricity and natural gas, indoor cooking took another turn. Today's microwave cooking has been used for some adaptation to Cajun cooking, but the vrai 'Cadien still likes his or her black iron pots that have been cured by several generations of use.

Most of the early utensils brought over from France were of tin-lined copper, and a few of these can still be found occasionally in antique shops and attics, or cast away in old outbuildings and barns. Iron pots were made at some of the early Canadian foundries, and handwrought cooking irons and utensils still survive, virtually indestructible, from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many are still in use, cherished by their owners, while others have found their way into museums, serving to illustrate early cooking methods.

Woodenware, mainly bowls, spoons, butter and cheese molds and the like have also survived, as well as ancient churns, paddles, and wooden pilon and pile's for husking rice. These latter can be found in rice country in Southwest Louisiana, and were in use by the Indians.

Collecting old cookware can be fascinating, and frequently turns up things that are of indescribable complexity, and unfathomable usage. Even the ancients loved their kitchen gadgets.

CAJUN FOODWAYS

Barry Jean Ancelet

It is no accident that Cajun food (especially gumbo) has often been used as a metaphor for Cajun cultural features. Like Cajun music, language, architecture and the Cajuns themselves, Cajun cooking is a hybrid, the result of a blend of French, Acadian, Spanish, German, Anglo-American, Afro-Carribean and native Amerindian influences. In addition to these influences, the frontier imposed itself on Cajun foodways, forcing the area's cooks to improvise recipes which made ingenious use of what was available to cook and to cook with.

The most obvious influence in Cajun cuisine is French. Indeed the people who eventually became the Acadians brought with them cooking styles from France, primarily the provinces of Vendée, Poitou and Bretagne. Many of the origins of France's fine cuisine are rooted in the need to make the best of a bad sitution. Among these was the development of cooking techniques designed to tenderize tough cuts of beef and pork and sauces designed to make simple foods more appetizing. It is said that the art of French sauce-making was developed during the Middles Ages when peasant and petite bourgeoisie housewives developed ways to overcome the poor quality and quantity of available fresh meat. Marinades, spices and longcooking techniques in covered pots helped to tenderize poor cuts and made them tastier. Marinades also helped to cure meat of dubious quality. Long cooking in covered pots also produced sauces which stretched the nutritional and filling value of the dishes.

In Louisiana, like in France, fresh pork and beef sausages were also made for immediate consumption. Before refrigeration, fresh cuts of meat were stored in the coolest available safe spot (sometimes hanging in a well) for a few days. In some areas frequent cooperative_ _boucheries_ made it possible to have fresh meat on a relatively regular basis. Participants at a*boucherie*did not let anything go to waste. Edible internal organs (liver, heart, spleen, kidneys, etc.) were cooked in a _sauce de débris_. Intestines and the stomach were used as casings for sausage and _boudin_. The skin of cows was used for chair bottoms; the skin of pigs was edible, however, and was fried to produce cracklins. Even the head provided the high concentration of gelatinous meats to produce _fromage de tête_, or head cheese, which is more highly seasoned than the version made by French _charcutiers_.

Louisiana _boudin_, though derived from the traditional French sausage, is quite different from the Gallic _boudin noir_, composed primarily of coagulated blood. The French _boudin blanc_, made of pounded chicken breasts, veal and sometimes sweetbreads, resembles more closely the Louisiana variety, though it is smoother and blander. The Cajuns traditionally made both white and red boudin. The white, which is the most common variety, is a spicy rice and pork dressing stuffed into casings. Red boudin, difficult to find today because of Department of Health restrictions on slaughtering procedures, is a form of rice dressing, but flavored and colored with blood.

Chickens, guineas, and other domestic fowl were a popular source of meat because of their small size. They could be slaughtered according to need and easily eaten by a family at one meal or two subsequent meals. Wild game was also a popular source of meat, especially during the winter months.

Certain meats can be preserved for a limited amount of time. There are several ways to accomplish this, all of which involve a curing process which salts, smokes or dries the meat. In France, this process was generally referred to as _charcuterie_. _Charcutiers_ produced slabs of cured meats and a wide variety of sausages. This tradition was preserved in Louisiana where individuals made salt pork and beef, _tasso_ and a wide variety of sausages, like smoked beef and pork sausage, _andouille_, and _chourice_, for family consumption. Meat was also preserved for shorter periods of time in jars of lard called _pots de grés_.

Keeping foods longer than the few days they were fresh was important to filling the gaps during the year. People found innovative ways to "extend the season on many foods." Fruits and some vegetables were usually preserved by "canning" them. Foods with high acid content, like tomatoes, and beans had relatively long shelf life and made popular canned goods. Sometimes these and other vegetables, like cucumbers and mirlitons, were pickled in vinegar and spices. Locally available fruits, like blackberries, dewberries, mulberries, wild cherries, and especially figs, were put up as preserves and used on bread and biscuits and to sweeten cakes, pies and cereals.

As in France, bread was an important staple in Louisiana. Bread was made from a variety of grain flours. Some, like wheat and rye, were known in Europe. Others, especially corn, were discovered here in the New World with the help of the native American Indian tribes. Since bread did not keep very long, batches were usually baked at least once or twice a week.

Cheese stretched the use of milk in the days before refrigeration. Yet, the importance of cheese in France (where there are over 400 varieties) did not translate to Louisiana. Except for a simple cottage cheese called *caillé goûté*, or dripped clabber, very little cheese was made by the Cajuns in Louisiana. The same appears to have been true of the Acadians even before leaving Acadie; visitors to that area before the exile complained about the lack of milk products in general. (Early Acadians used oil, often bear oil, to cook with instead of butter.) This may have been due to the lack of milk cattle in these settlements. In Louisiana, cattle herds were almost always composed of beef stock, usually longhorns, which produced little milk and gave it up to individuals other than their own offspring only with great difficulty. The butter question may be mitigated by the fact that most of the Acadians originated in the province of Poitou, on the cusp between France's butter-based cuisine to the north and its oil-based cuisine to the south. Cooking with oil was probably not unknown to them and when milk products were unavailable, they naturally turned to vegetable oils and animal fats. (Perhaps the best known oil-based cooking technique in Louisiana cuisine is the roux, flour browned in oil which serves as the basis for many sauces and gumbos. In southern France, like in Louisiana, roux is made by browning flour in oil; in northern France, the flour is browned in butter.)

Once in the New World, the French settlers who were to become the Acadians found it necessary to relearn many things, including what was good to eat, how to get it and how to cook it. They learned much of this from the native American Indian tribes in the area (especially the Micmacs) who taught them techniques for acquiring native game and fish, and for growing native fruits and vegetables, especially corn and potatoes. Many of the names for new plants (like maïs = corn) and animals (like chaoui = raccoon) were borrowed directly from Indian languages. After the exile, the Acadians had to relearn what to eat and how to get it in sub-tropical Louisiana. Again, the native American Indians, especially the Chitimacha and Houmas tribes, contributed greatly to this process of reorientation.

The most obvious example of native American influence is the cultivation and consumption of corn. This was generally true throughout North America. Once corn was discovered, it quickly became a staple grain. This was not true in France where corn is still considered primarily for animal consumption. In addition to roasting and boiling fresh ears, one of the first uses of preserved corn was a bland corn meal gruel called sagamite. Sweetened and added to fresh milk, this became what the Acadians called couche-couche, perhaps because of its resemblance to an African semolina-based mush called cous-cous. Spices, onions and tomatoes were added to stewed fresh corn to produce maquechoux.

The practice of cooking with tomatoes and hot peppers was a confluence of influences from Spanish and Afro-Carribean sources. Cajuns learned to enjoy peppers and sauces piquantes as do many others who dwell in the sub-tropics. The "heat" of the spices actually serves to cool the eaters in the long run. Another African influence was single dish combinations like jambalaya and gumbo. Jambalaya closely resembles sub-Saharan communal rice-based dishes which are eaten by hand, each person rolling his/her own balls of the sticky mixture and popping them into the mouth. Sugar cane, imported from the West Indies, was used to produce cane syrup, sugar and a primitive rum called tafia. Cane syrup was used as a sweetener and source calories over many foods, as among other poor southern people. It was also used to make cakes, pralines and other confections.

Gumbo is perhaps the most dramatic of the dishes with African origins. It is often considered an apt metaphor for the blend of influences now called Cajun culture. Indeed, gumbo draws on many traditions. Its main ingredient is okra, a vegetable first imported from western Africa where it is called _guingombo_. The spicy cayenne seasoning, typical of subtropical cuisines, represents Spanish and Carribean influences. In Louisiana, gumbo is eaten with rice, a crop introduced by the French who harvested providence rice in the flooded lowlands produced by the Louisiana prairie's high clay pan. It was grown by slaves and Creole and Cajun yeomen as a supplementary food source, and later made a local staple by German- and Anglo-American farmers from the Midwest.

Now gumbo is considered festive, but originally it was housewife's way of making do with whatever was at hand: chicken, guinea hen, duck, turkey, rabbit, quail, dove, blackbird, deer, and other wild or domestic meats, alone or in combination. Seafood, once used only in coastal communities, has come into general use with the advent of refrigeration. Shrimp and crab, too delicate to blend well with most meats, are usually used alone or together. Oysters, on the other hand, hold their own and are often added for flavoring. Traditionally, beef and pork are not used in gumbo except in the form of smoked or fresh sausages. Though okra gave its name to the dish, it is not an indispensable ingredient. A gumbo made with okra is usually called *gombo fêvi*. *Gombo filé,* on the other hand, draws on French culinary tradition for its base, a roux. Just before serving, gumbo filé is thickened by the addition of powdered sassafras leaves, one of the native American Indian contributions to Louisiana cooking.

Today, no food is more representative of Cajun culture than the crawfish. Crawfish are rare in the streams of France today because they have been eaten almost into extinction by the French. Yet, until the 1940s and 1950s, though considered edible, they were not commercially available in Louisiana. Nor were they inordinately prized. In fact, the derogatory connotation of "mudbug," which still repels outsiders until they taste them, was not unknown in South Louisiana even thirty years ago, when shrimp and crabs were much more in demand, particularly in towns within easy reach of the coast. People who lived close to crawfish sources, along the Atchafalaya Basin or near prairie lowlands, bayous and drainage ditches, gathered them from time to time, usually to boil or steam. It was not until the mid-1950s when commercial processing began to make them readily available that they gained in popularity. They have retained a certain exotic aura, however, and locals like to play upon the revulsion of outsiders faced for the first time with the prospect of eating these delicious but unusual creatures, goading them to suck the "head" (technically, the thorax). A few tails will usually convert the most squeamish unbelievers. As crawfish became commercially available, restaurant chefs and home cooks alike began experimenting with the peeled tails and "fat" to develop recipes for stews, casseroles and thermidores. The simplest of these new recipes, crawfish _étouffée_, is also the most delicate and most popular. More and more outsiders fall in love with the lowly crawfish each season, so that the industry now plays a major role in the economy of South Louisiana, exporting to urban areas coast to coast and to France.

The Cajuns discovered some new plants when they arrived in Louisiana. They did not know the eggplant, for example, until then. Thus they did not have a name for it and borrowed the Spanish word _berengena_ which eventually became _brème_. To this day the standard word _aubergine_ is unknown in South Louisiana. The eggplant, which grows very easily in Cajun country, is used in many sorts of "dressings," alone or combined with chopped ham, crumbled sausage, browned ground meat, or minced seafood.

An inexpensive source of protein and carbohydrates, beans were once standard fare for slaves and poor whites in the South and the West Indies. Flavoring it with sausage was a luxurious touch which came later. The basic ingredients of beans and rice dishes, milled rice, dried beans and cured ham or smoked sausage, were easy to store over relatively long periods. Beans and rice followed gumbo and crawfish to become fashionable cuisine in recent times. They are still often served with corn bread, thus duplicating typical nineteenth-century poor man's fare.

Cajuns have been very innovative in the development of their cuisine, adapting recipes to available ingredients, including the use of exotic meats, including turtle, alligator, nutria, raccoon, possum, and armadillo. Some or all of these may have been eaten by the American Indians, but were hardly standard European fare, even in the colonies. Yet, the Cajuns learned to prepare and eat these and other animals to provide meat in their diet.

The use of turtle meat may been learned from the English, turtle soup being a favorite in Britain. Turtles are said to have seven different kinds of meat. Yet most parts of the turtle have the same rich, pungent taste which makes a little go a long way in stews and soups. Cajuns usually caught turtles by probing the banks of canals and bayous for underwater holes and pulling them out by hand, avoiding the head by felling the grain of the scales on the back. Increasingly rare, difficult to catch and and even harder to butcher, turtles are an expensive delicacy today.

Alligator, of course, was rightly considered an exotic and dangerous reptile. Only a few decades ago, the Louisiana alligator was listed as an endangered species. By the early 1980s, the population had grown to such an extent that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries opened an annual alligator hunting season. Once prized only for its skin, the alligator has become popular for the surprisingly delicate meat which trappers used to discard. Barbequed and fried tail are the new rave in culinary circles. Meat from other parts of the body is used in soups, stews and sauces.

Large rodents, like nutria, and other unusual animals, like raccoons, possums and armadillos, are hardly standard fare in South

Louisiana today. Indeed many young Cajuns find them as repulsive as most outsiders. They are edible, and can even be quite tasty. They also have an obvious shock value which some afficionados like to play up. These exotic meats are frequently associated with a sort of macho/outdoor/camp life and consequently are popular among groups of men who eat them conspicuously and boast of eating them to other, less hardy types. Even the hardiest cooks avoid preparing these highly pungent meats in the confines of a kitchen, prefering to grill or barbeque them outside instead.

Because of the heat, cool drinks became popular in South Louisiana. Anglo-American, German and Alsacian immigrants combined to generate a penchant for beer among the Cajuns. Wine, far more popular as a beverage in France, was known early in Louisiana, but was supplanted by beer, probably in this century. Popular non-alcoholic drinks include such pan-South cool drinks as iced teas (made with a variety of fresh leaves, herbs, and mints) and root beer (originally made with sassafras roots).

Like Cajun culture in general, Cajun cooking continues to adapt itself to changing times. The most important change, of course, was refrigeration, which made it possible to preserve seafood, meats and vegetables by cooling or freezing them. This had a great variety of effects on Cajun foodways. Community boucheries were no longer necessary for a regular source of fresh meat, which became an imporant dietary staple. Boudin, formerly limited to the winter months, was made available year round, served hot from Japanese rice steamers or microwave ovens in most convenience stores. Seafood became more readily and widely available. Dairy products became more easily available. Along with refrigeration came improved transportation which brought in products from the outside, like mushrooms, asparagus, artichokes and celery.

These kinds of changes also affected recipes which became more complex with a wider variety of foods to choose from. Cajun cooks began to experiment with new ingredients. Oysters were added to gumbos. Celery was added to onions and bell peppers as a standard seasoning vegetable. Mushrooms were added to many dishes. During the middle part of the twentieth century, chefs at restaurants like Don's, Jacob's, and the Riverside Inn, in Lafayette, the Yellow Bowl, in Jeanerette, Robin's and Pat's, in Henderson, the Palace, in Opelousas, and others, developed a Cajun *haute cuisine*, combining the solid characteristics of simple Cajun country cooking with contemporary ingredients and Creole styles. And the experimentation continues in places like Chez Pastor, the Vermilionville Café, the Landing, and many others, as well as in homes throughout South Louisiana. Since the 1950s, there has been a veritable explosion in the uses for crawfish. One can find crawfish boudin, crawfish casseroles and crawfish au gratin. As South Louisiana grows more cosmopolitan, one also finds crawfish pizza, crawfish tamales and even crawfish egg rolls). There is a whole industry growing around Cajun cooking. One can buy prefabricated roux, pre-blended "Cajun" spices, and even Cajun frozen dinners. And, of course, since the arrival of chef Paul Prudhomme, whose eccentric creativity has helped bring Cajun cuisine to national prominence, one can find blackened redfish, blackened catfish, and blackened chicken in restaurants from Portland to Portland and from Miami to Montreal.

PART IX LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

FRENCH IN LOUISIANA

David Barry

Introduction

The term Louisiana French or French in Louisiana, at first glance, gives the appearance of homgeneity, a cultural and linguistic reality that is often described as a whole, a single historical ethnic reality. However, one has only to scratch the surface of the "Acadian triangle" to discover the complexity and richness of the French language fact in Louisiana. Both the contemporary linguistic mosaic and the varied historical origins which have contributed the linguistic elements of Louisiana French quickly demystify the idea of a homogeneous linguistic reality in the State. If there is a unifying linguistic force, it is certainly the fact that the French language persists as a living, working language in daily life within a fairly well defined geographic area of Southwest Louisiana. To the non-French speaker, this unique phenomenon in the overwhelming melting pot of American, English-speaking culture may well appear to be an isolated, homogeneous reality. Nevertheless, French in Louisiana has a long, multi-faceted history beginning with the establishment of a French colony in the area in 1699 and has undergone successive waves of linguistic variations which need to be outlined in order to form a clearer idea of what may be considered "Louisiana French", or more appropriately "the French fact in Louisiana."

The evolution of French in Louisiana, at one level, follows the historical development of the people, since linguistic reality depends on the French-speaking groups and/or non-French-speaking groups who arrived at various periods in the region and the interplay of language realities with cultural realities. The linguistic phenomenon is closely tied therefore to the time of arrival, the numbers, the durability and the eventual impact of various immigrant groups over the last three hundred years in the region. On another level, linguistic demographics reflect specific language groups which continuously fluctuate, overlap, shift and sometimes disappear in the flow of history. Since this linguistic dynamic does not necessarily follow the chronological evolution of history, much discussion exists as to the definition and development of linguistic groups in Louisiana. In 1931, Read stated that, "Two varieties of French, different yet closely related, are spoken in Lousiana." [Read, Louisiana French xvii] and, twenty-five years later, Julliand and Conwell write, "The French spoken in Louisiana is usually divided in three main dialects, Colonial French, Acadian French, and Negro French." [Julliand-Conwell, Louisiana French Grammar 17]. Whatever the definition and the division of linguistic groups that one uses, it is obvious that French is not a homogeneous reality and that a consideration of both language groups and historical evolution is necessary to describe the rich, changing French-fact in Southwest Louisiana.

Linguistic History

Just as sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries France are the pivotal moments in tracing the French heritage of Louisiana, so does this period reflect the linguistic reality which impacted the long evolution of the French language in the area. Both the early French colonization of the Mississippi Delta and the roots of the Acadians of New France are found in France at this time. Oddly enough there are some unusual parallels between the French language of this period in France and the linguistic situation of contemporary Louisiana; both demonstrate a tremendous state of flux internally as to language use and with respect to other non-French linguistic realities. Today, Louisiana French finds itself under immense assimilative pressure from the anglophone American culture which surrounds and permeates the "French triangle". At the same time, the many regional variants of French in the state are confronted by a universal "bon français" (good French) which is taught in the schools and often adds an undue stigma to the daily language of many French-speakers.

In sixteenth century France, the country was just coming out of the Middle Ages when Latin dominated the intellectual, ecclesiastical and written language of the time. Latin was the prestigious language of this period and, although French was considered a useful language for daily affairs, it did not possess the gravity and dignity to discuss fundamental questions of erudition.(1) Moreover, the proliferation of regional patois or dialects of French made it difficult to establish a linguistic norm that could be used throughout the country for speaking, writing and teaching. Since the King and much of the royalty lived in the region of the île de France, this variant slowly evolved into the more or less standard form for the entire country. However, even on the eve of the French Revolution in 1789, millions of French still used a regional patois as their maternal language for everyday communication and France was far from speaking a standardized, universal language which has mythically been the trademark of the country.(2) This multiple linguistic reality is therefore the same reality which accompanied the early colonizers of the New World both in Louisiana, Canada and Acadia. The local linguistic phenomena of each region of origin, hence, had as much importance on language evolution in Louisiana as did the more universal development of the French language in a historical context.

Regionalisms, patois and the ever changing "standard" French of île de France all played an important part in language development in Louisiana, first through the actual colonization of the region which was undertaken by both French-Canadians from New France and others embarking directly from France, and secondly through the concentrated immigration of Acadians from New Brunswick during the second half of the eighteenth when Louisiana was under Spanish rule. The actual linguistic origins of the early colonial period are difficult to ascertain, but William Read asserts that immigration to Canada during this period was dominated by three northern and north-central regions. "The Norman, the Picard, and the French of the île de France form nine tenths of the Canadian French language..." [Read, Louisiana-French xviii]. The importance of these linguistic demographics is underlined for Louisiana by Pascal Poirier who held that the colonization of the region was largely the work of Canadian functionaries and colonists.(3) Within the framework of the history of French in Louisiana, the origins of the language are of interest in describing what is commonly known as Colonial French, the language most commonly spoken in New Orleans and along the Mississippi River delta area until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Even under Spanish rule, the Louisiana colony remained French-speaking for the large majority of its inhabitants. However, by the early twentieth century, except for a few old Creole families in and around New Orleans and in St. Martinville, the French of the colonial period had almost disappeared as a daily language of work and family life. In 1931 Read described this linguistic reality as a "dialect which is not far removed from Standard French in syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation." [Read, Louisiana-French xvii] Aside from a few new words, either taken from English or the Acadian dialect of the area, and some archaic terms whose meanings have evolved from the French spoken in France, education by European teachers or study in France for the members of the Creole families prompted a linguistic evolution which parallels the continental reality. Today, the remnants of Colonial French make up directly only a very small percentage of the French-speakers of Louisiana.

It is the second aspect of French language development in Louisiana which is of prime importance in describing the linguistic mosaic of the area : the establishment of the Acadian population in the region and the subsequent internal and external linguistic influences which added to their linguistic evolution. Although arriving as poor immigrants for the most part, exiled unwillingly from their Acadian homeland, some sixty or seventy years after the first French colonizers and during the time of the Spanish regime in Louisiana, the linguistic element imported with the Acadians has become the most dominant and enduring language feature of Southwest Louisiana. Why this group has attained cultural dominance after two hundred years when the more economically endowed colonizers have been, for all practical purposes, subsumed into the prevailing anglophone culture has been fodder for the observations of cultural anthropologists, cultural geographers and social historians for decades. Many observations have been presented including the relative geographic isolation of the Acadian settlement pattern, the more intimate, close-knit family structue of the group, the lower socio-economic status as a buffer against possible external cultural and economic interest, the relative cultural and theological conservatism which tended to be introspective and inclusive, the assimilative power of the Acadian culture in contact with other ethno-linguistic groups (Irish, English, Spanish and German).

All of these elements contain varying degrees of truth and import in the importance of cultural and linguistic survival of the Acadians. However, these socio-historic elements are described more completely elsewhere [cf. C. Brasseaux] and the linguisitic characteristics are more appropriately treated here as to their possible role in the shifting cultural and historical pattern. Language as a reflection of culture is certainly not to be ignored in such a dynamic. Most of the earlier reports on the Acadian "dialect" present a linguistic slant which, on close inspection, seems to run counter to the actual evolution of French-language import in Louisiana: the rise of Cajun French and the relative demise of other language variants, especially colonial French. A more recent study, that of Wiliam Read, illustrates this seeming paradox.

> As the Acadians have to a great extent retained their peculiar dialect, which shows kinship especially with the patois of Normandy, Picardy, Saintonge, and the region about Paris, they are still commonly distinguished from the Creoles of Louisiana by the term Acadians or the less dignified Cajuns. It is the Acadians themselves, however, who have corrupted Acadien into the familiar or derisive Cadien, pronounced Kaj~e. Nevertheless, many educated Acadians speak excellent French and excellent English as well. [Read, Louisiana-French xviii] [my emphasis added]

The linguistic biais is obvious toward the "standard", continental variety of French in the observations of even the most sympathetic researcher. As an oral language which evolved in relative isolation from the linguistic history of French language as a mythical, universal abstract, the inferiority of Acadian French is implicit, if not explicit. Even the most contemporary studies often fall into this naïve linguistic trap which places a prejudicial perception of the language of the Cajuns. In a 1986 study of the "Cadjins" -- at least Read was right in the spelling -- by Patrick Griolet, the writer describes Cajun French as a "simply fascinating archaic form" which has survived the modern world because of its characteristic as a "tribal family much like the tribes of Gaules or Israelites".(4)

Is Cajun French then nothing but a socio-linguistic freak accident, isolated in time and space, which is destined to rapidly disappear in the melting pot of American, anglophone culture? Many researchers predict this imminent fate, including many Cajuns themselves. And if this were true, it does not explain however the persistent linguistic phenomenon of the last 200 to 300 hundred years. Although a socio-historic document, the recent work of Carl Brasseaux of the Center for Louisiana Studies at the University of Southwestern Louisiana may offer the key to this linguistic accident -- an oral language which perseveres against all odds. [cf. Brasseaux, "Acadian Origins in France", in this report]. The more limited geographic origins in France of the vast majority of Acadians described by Brasseaux redefines the linguistic parameters in the pioneer works of such important researchers as Genevive Massignon.(5)

Given the myriad of local patois and dialects in France during the time of the Acadian migrations to the New World and their dominance in the spoken language(6), place of origin becomes an essential element, often overlooked or underestimated in prior studies, in the historic evolution of Acadian/Cajun French. This dialectical impact on oral language tradition and the relative isolation of the Acadians from the beginning of the seventeenth century when they arrived in Acadia and continuing through the Louisiana years has encouraged a unique language evolution. In Acadia this linguistic and cultural isolation was considered an important element for the survival of the Acadian culture and language.(7) It is easy to ascertain that not only the unwillingness of the Louisiana Creoles to accept and assimilate the newly arrived Acadian immigrants into the delta culture they had established contributed to the establishment of the rural Acadians in the more remote areas of the Attakapas and Opelousas posts, but the long standing social psychology of self-preservation through geographic insulation which was formed in Acadia continued in their new home. The Cajun langauge and culture therefore developed its assimilative powers as a means of survival without the aid of written documentation or French-language education.

Linguistic Groups

The previous section has dealt with the linguistic history of Louisiana French as a diachronic phenomenon, from past to present. It remains to consider the synchronic linguistic reality, present day language interchange between linguistic groups, both francophone and non-francophone. Generally, this situation is split into three linguistic groups: Creoles, Acadians /Cajuns and Black Creoles, with an added external reality encompassing all non-francophone groups. "The French spoken in Louisiana is usually divided in three main dialects, Colonial French, Acadian French, and Negro French." [Julliand and Conwell, Louisiana French Grammar 18] The last group, the Black Creoles, has not been mentioned previously since the linguistic evolution (the creole language) of this ethnic and racial group follows a different diachronic pattern. However, Julliand and Conwell go on to assert that Colonial French is a moot classification in the twentieth century since, "this classification has now become obsolete, ... no longer spoken by a community large enough to maintain its distinct character... It is preserved only artificially, in certain families and in cultural societies." [18]

There is an inherent danger in equating socio-cultural groups in a historical chronology and linguistic groups, since the disappearance of a social group -- Colonial French-speaking Creoles -- and an equivalent linguistic group are not the same phenomenon. Although Colonial French may have been, in most cases, subsumed into the Acadian French-speaking group, the linguistic reality itself is an integral part of the synchronic interchange between linguistic groups [bodies of language] in contemporary Louisiana French. The aforementioned perspective would assume the existence of "pure" language groups, which is rarely ever the case in the real world, and would denigrate the cross-linguistic exchange between language groups which is evident at all levels of French language use in Louisiana.

Although passive as a collective means of communication in today's Louisiana, the French of the early Creoles is present in the contemporary linguistic dynamic. The oft held idea that little, if any, exchange existed between these two groups (Acadians and Creoles) , especially on the level of language, has been contested in a recent study by Griolet.(8) Admittedly separate on social grounds, many linguistic elements of Cajun French traced back to origins in France by way of Acadia which were of very little apparent impact on the early Acadian immigrants -- such as the areas of île de France and Brittany -- may well be part of the Creole linguistic corpus subsumed in current Cajun French language. Little research has been done in this area, but the hypothesis seems likely given the lexical and morpho-syntaxic variants in Cajun French which often correspond to degrees of proximity and interchange with earlier Creole French groups as in Evangeline, Avoyelles, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin and St. Landry parishes. Even Read who is categorical in his value judgements for Colonial and against Acadian French admits: "It is obviously impossible to erect an insurmountable barrier between the language of the Creoles and that of the Acadians. ... Manifestly, each has exerted some influence on the other" [Read, xxi] Some lexical items in Acadian/Cajun French of archaic French origin are not found in Poirier's Acadian glossary and, hence, must derive from a direct linguistic source through colonial times; others are found in regions of France from which Acadians did not emmigrate to the New World, i.e banquette for sidewalk, ilet for a group of houses, charrer for to converse, tarder for to wait, couette for ticking or cover of a mattress, cuilte for quilt, gratons for cracklings. The use of both auxilliary verbs in the past tense, avoir and étre, instead of the use of only avoir follows quite closely the demographics of linguistic exchange or isolation of Acadian /Cajun French viz-a-viz Colonial French. More extensive documentation is necessary to delineate adequately the functional role of this linguistic remnant in current Louisiana French. Nonetheless, in a synchronic vein, the reality of French spoken by earlier Creoles must be maintained in the description of today's French-speaking population.

The second linguistic grouping, the Acadian, needs little commentary in this context since it has been described in various ways by all researchers in the field. As well, it is by far the dominant element in contemporary Louisiana French language and will be illustrated elsewhere in this report. The third group, the Black Creole, has a somewhat different status for both linguistic and socio-cultural reasons. Originally the language of slaves brought by French colonial sugar plantation owners who fled Saint-Domingue in the French West Indies at the close of the 18th century during the slave insurrections and re-established themselves along the Mississippi River and the Delta bayous, Creole has traditionally been an inferior language class which reflected the socio-economic reality of slavery.

Consequently, the language was restricted to blacks and what few whites who had reason or need to communicate with them. Aside from a small group of Creole-speakers along the Cane River -- now almost nonexistant -- the language was limited both to racial groups and socio-economic demographics. Often called "français gumbo" or "parler nèg'", this linguistic phenomenon was distinct from other forms of Louisiana French, both from a language point of view and socio-cultural perspective. Since there was little racial mixing, linguistic isolation was also imposed on the Black slaves.

Although originally a French-based language from contact with French colonists and plantation owners, the Creole language evolved differently than dialects or regional patois of French [cf. Chaudenson, Valdman, Morgan, Neuman]. Since Africans taken as slaves were deliberately separated from others speaking the same tribal language, in order to more easily control them, Creole developed from pidgin forms of French for the needs of basic communication. The evolutionary process of the language (creolisation) has been similar in all areas where African slaves were owned by French colonizers. Most creolists agree that this process led to a totally different language, with some recognizable French language traits depending on the degree of creolization. However, this phenomenon has often led to confusion among linguists studying French in Louisiana.

In his doctoral dissertation(9), Jacques Henry admits that Louisiana Creole has an unusual structure and phonologie wherein one finds influences from Africa and the Antilles, yet he compares the simplification of these structures to other French dialects in

Louisiana. It is only a more "accentuated" phenomenon which does, oddly enough, ressemble other creoles in the French-speaking world! In reality, the de-creolization process of the language because of interchange with the majority, socially superior Cajun French is bringing the language group closer to Louisiana French and it is not simply an exaggerated simplification of French. Undoubtedly for social and racial reasons dating back to the days of slavery, Creole has not received the same attention as Cajun French, except from Creolists outside the state or country.

However, the parentage between creole languages has been amply documented, particularly by the researchers associated with the "Comité International dếtudes Créoles", centered at the University of Provence in Aix, France. Louisiana Creole, although poorly documented to date, has been shown to stem historically from Hati(10) and contains a rich linguistic heritage, albeit different from other forms of Louisiana French.

It should be noted that the traditional distinctions of Creole and French based upon race and ethnic group have been transformed to parameters of linguistic demographics, in large part, during the last one hundred years. [cf. Map of Black French-speakers from 1970 census] Aside from the isolated, almost extinct, reality of the Cane Rivers Creoles in northwest Louisiana, large numbers of whites speak Creole in the old sugar cane areas of the state, such as Parks, Catahoula, Breaux Bridge and St. Martinville [Neuman]. This shift in language reality has certainly accelerated the de-creolization process, yet the socio-economic status of Creole has not improved. Most, if not all, white Creole-speakers also speak Cajun French, a more preferred dialect outside the home environment. A comparaison of the evolutionary process of Haitian and Louisiana Creole shows the marked difference in the two languages today; the first having continued the creolization process in relative isolation and the second, by close contact with Acadian French and English, having done the opposite. [Albert Valdmann, Dictionnaire Français/ Créole - Créole/Français 2 (Bloomington, IN: Institute of Creole Studies, 1985) and Neuman, Morgan] Even though Creole appears to be losing ground rapidly in the face of English and has not developped a written form other than the original poetic efforts of Debbie Clifton and Ulysse Ricard [Cris sur le Bayou, Acadie Tropicale], it plays an important part in the mosaic of linguistic groupings in the area because of its unique origins and linguistic evolution.

The last linguistic group, non-French ethnic groups, is partially related to the Creole linguistic phenomenon. A limited number of lexical items can be traced to African origins, i.e. bamboula - party, colinda - particular dance, congo - water mocassin, gombo - soup with roux base, févi gombo - okra, gris-gris - protective charm, ouaouaron - bull frog. Other linguistic borrowings have come from Spanish, various Indian languages, Italian, but these are very minor in the context of Louisiana French as a linguistic whole. Even Read, who gives the most complete -- and often questionable borrowings as to their true origins -- does not demonstrate an important linguistic impact on Louisiana French from other language borrowings [Read, 76-151]. The interplay is also limited to lexical items and not the morphology or syntax and structure of the language. This minimal linguistic impact reinforces the idea of the strong assimilative powers and resiliency of Acadian/Cajun French. It was the French langauge which prevailed, even among certain Indian tribes of the area.

Nevertheless, one non-French language reality has had and continues to have an increasing impact on the reality of Louisiana French - English. The polemic of the American "melting pot" theory and the preservation of ethnic languages is well documented elsewhere [reports of B. Ancelet]. Until only recently, French-speakers of Louisiana were relatively isolated from other francophone areas of the world; additionally, the culture did not receive French-speaking immigrants of any consequence after the purchase of the Louisiana territory by the United State in 1803. Slowly at first and later in a constantly accelerating fashion, English has impacted on all linguistic levels Louisiana French.

SCHIZOPHRENIE LINGUISTIQUE, by Jean Arceneaux, Juillet 1978

I will not speak French on the school grounds.
I will not speak French on the school grounds.
I will not speak French...
I will not speak French...
I will not speak French...
Hé! Ils sont pas bêtes, ces salauds.
Après mille fois, ça commence à pénétrer
Dans n'importe quel esprit.
Ca fait mal; ça fait honte;
Puis là, ça fait plus mal.
Ça devient automatique,
Et on speak pas French on the school grounds
Et ni anywhere else non plus.
Jamais avec des étrangers.
On ne sait jamais qui a l'autorité
De Faire écrire ces sacrées lignes
A n'importe quel age.
Surtout pas avec les enfants.
Faut jamais que eux, its passent leur temps de recess
A écrire ces sacrées lignes.
Faut pas qu'ils aient besoin d'écrire ça

Parce qu'il faut pas qu'ils parlent français du tout.
Ca laisse voir qu'on est rien que des Cadiens.
Dont'mind us, we're just poor coonasses.
Basse classe, faut cacher ça.
Faut dépasser ça.
Faut parler anglais.
Faut regarder la télévision en anglais.
Faut écouter la radio en Anglais.
Comme de bons Américains.
Why not just go ahead and learn English.
Don't fight it. It's much easier anyway.
No bilingual bills, no bilingual publicity.
No danger of internal frontiers.
Enseignez l'anglais aux enfants.
Rendez-les tout le long,
Tout le long jusqu'aux discos, Jusqu'au Million Dollar Man.
On a pas réellement besoin de parler français quand même.
C'est les Etats-Unis ici,
Land of the free.
On restera toujours rien que des poor coonasses.
Coonass. Non, non. Ca gêne pas.
C'est juste un petit nom.
Ca veut rien dire.
C'est pour s'amuser. Ca gêne pas.
On aime ça. C'est cute.
Ca nous fait pas fachés.
Ca nous fait rire.
Mais quand on doit rire, c'es en quelle langue qu'on rit?
Et pour pleurer, c'est en quelle langue qu'on pleure?
Et pour crier?
Et chanter?
Et aimer?
Et vivre?

Although many English borrowings have been assimilated into Louisiana French through phonetic incorporation, most have retained their original linguistic identity and are seen by some as intrusions, barbarisms and negative linguistic elements which contribute to the attrition of Louisiana French, or more emphatically the deterioration of the language under immense linguistic pressures. Many see these new linguistic dynamic as the death knell of French in Louisiana, while at least one lexographer has tried to rationalize, romantically, a possible linguistic synthesis:

The Cajuns, as part of the broader American culture, found it both convenient and logical to make use of existing English terminology for all those new things for which no Cajun terminology existed. The result was that many English words have become an integral part of the Cajun language. This fact in no way can be considered a mongrelization or corruption of the Cajun language. It is simply an integral part of Cajun-American history. [Jules O. Daigle, A Dictionary of the Cajun Language (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1984) xix]

FOOTNOTES

1. Peter Rikard, La Langue franaise au seizime sicle (London: CambridgeUniversity Press, 1968) 1"Au sortir du moyen ge, le franais avait infiniment moins de prestige que le latin, qui en plus de son rle de langue inter- nationale tait celle de l'enseignement en France, et, l'exception des sermons populaires, celle de l'glise. On n'enseignait pas du tout la langue vulgaire: il fallait l'apprendre force de l'entendre parler, et encore sous de multiples formes rgionales.... Langue utile certes dans les affaires banales, il y manquait la dignit et la gravit essentielles la discussion de questions fondamentales et la composition d'oeuvres d'rudtion."

2. Rikard, 18."S'il y avait encore la veille de la Rvolution des millions de patoisants en France, comme il ressort du clbre rapport de l'abb Grgoire, il est permis de supposer, plus forte raison, que les patois taient bien vivaces au XVIe sicle, et il n'est que de consulter les textes et surtout les grammaires de l'poque pour trouver la confirmation de cet 'a priori'."

3. Pascal Poirier, Le parler franco-acadien et ses origines (Qubec:Imprimerie franciscaine missionnaire, 1928) 75."Il est noter que la colonisation de la Lousiane fut en grandepartie une oeuvre canadienne, oeuvre de fontionnaires et de colons de ce pays."

4. Patrick Griolet, Cadjins et Créoles en Louiaiane (Paris: Payot, 1986) 36-37."Il [le peuple cadien] n'est, en fait, qu'une mme famille ramifie l'infini : une tribu. Telles durent tre l'origine les peuplades gauloises, les peuplades grecques, les tribus d'Isral ou les clans cossais. Peuple, nation, patrie, race taient confondus dans un groupe, dans une famille."

5. Genevive Massignon, Les Parlers français d'Acadie 2 (Paris: C. Klincksieck,1962) 31-75.

6. Besides the monumental work of Massignon, see Charles Thurot, De lapronociation depuis le commence du XVIe sicle, d'aprs le tmoinage desgrammariens 2 (Paris: anonymous, 1881-1883); Jules Glliron et E.Edmont, Atlas linguistique de la France 7(Paris, 1903-1910); Walther von Wartburg, Bibliographie des dictionnaires patois (Paris, 1934); PierreMartellire, Glossaire du Vendmois (Orlans-Vendme, 1893); GrardDottin, Glossaire des parlers du Bas-Maine (Paris, 1910); Lucien Favre,Glossaire du Poitou, de la Saintogne et de l'Aunis (Niort, 1867); G. Musset,Glossaire des patois et des parlers de l'Aunis et de la Saintonge 5 (LaRochelle, 1929-1948).

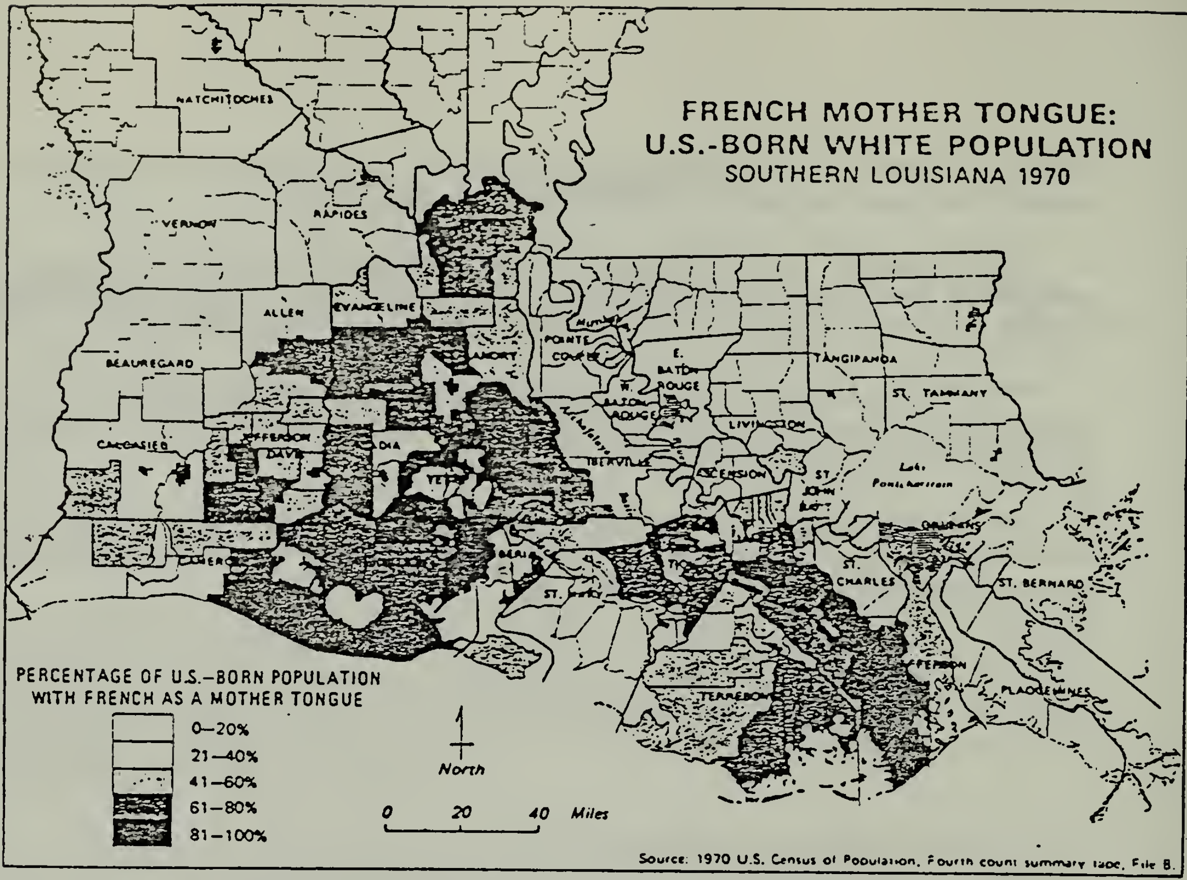
7. Jean-Claude Vernex, "Espace et appartenance: l'exemple des Acadiens auNouveau-Brunswick", Du continent perdu l'archipel retrouv, eds. DeanLouder and Eric Waddell (Qubec: Les Presses de l"universit Laval, 1983)165."Ajoutons cependant que l'isolement des fronts de colonisation francophones avait t considr par les chefs lacs et religieux acadiens comme la condition mme de la surviecultureIle du

groupe, comme la meilleure garantie contre les influences nfastes et assimilatrices du monde protestant et anglo-saxon."

8. Griolet, 68."S'il est vrai que les communauts no-orlanaise et acadienne sont trs cloisonnes, il n'en serait pas moins excessif de croire que des changes linguistiques ne se sont pas effectus."

9. Jacques Henry, *Le Mouvement louisianais de renouveau francophone: ver sune nouvelle identit cadjine*? unpub. diss. (Paris: Universit Paris V,1982) 47-48.

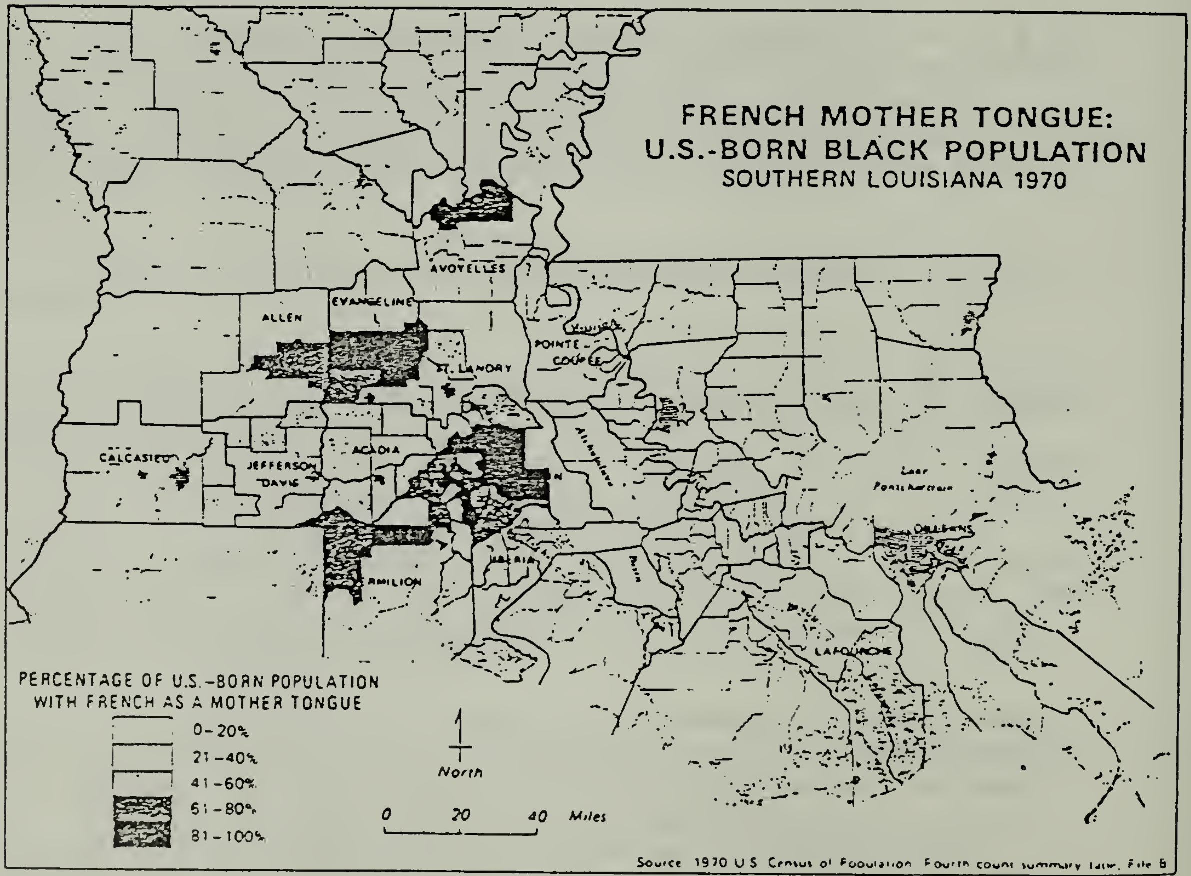
10. Robert Maguire, "Creoles and Creole Language Use in St. Martin Parish,Louisiana", *Cahiers de gographie du Qubec* 23:59 (Qubec: Presses de l'Universit Laval, 1979) 281-302.


NATCHITOCHES
VERNON
RAPIDES
ALLEN
EVANGELINE
BEAUREGARD
CALCASIEU
JEFFERSON DAVIS
POINTE COUPEE
W. BATON ROUGE
E. BATON ROUGE
IBERVILLE
ASCENSION
ST. JOHN BAPT.
LIVINGSTON
TANGIPAHOA
ST. TAMMANY
Lake Pontchartrain
ORLEANS
ST. CHARLES
ST. BERNARD
JEFFERSON
PLAQUEMINES
TERREBONNE
PERCENTAGE OF U.S.-BORN POPULATION WITH FRENCH AS A MOTHER TONGUE
0–20%
21–40%
41–60%
61–80%
81–100%
North
0 20 40 Miles

FRENCH MOTHER TONGUE:
U.S.-BORN WHITE POPULATION
SOUTHERN LOUISIANA 1970

Source: 1970 U.S. Census of Population, Fourth count summary tape, File B.

James P. Allen, Department of Geography California
State University, Northridge.


AVOYELLES
ALLEN
EVANGELINE
ST. LANDRY
POINTE-COUPEE
CALCASIEU
JEFFERSON DAVIS
ACADIA
IBERIA
Lake Pontchartrain
ORLEANS
LAFOURCHE
PERCENTAGE OF U.S.-BORN POPULATION WITH FRENCH AS A MOTHER TONGUE
0–20%
21–40%
41–60%
61–80%
81–100%
North
0 20 40 Miles

FRENCH MOTHER TONGUE:
U.S.-BORN BLACK POPULATION
SOUTHERN LOUISIANA 1970

Source: 1970 U.S. Census of Population, Fourth count summary tape, File B

BICULTURALISM AND BILINGUALISM: THE CAJUN EXPERIENCE

David Barry

The bilingual ethnic group, having a distinctive dual linguistic character, is defined biculturally to a large extent by language use as a distinguishing marker of cultural attributes and group activities. On general linguistic and cultural levels, there is continual interference and transference between the two languages and cultures represented in the ethnic group. Ideally, there should be some middle ground where both cultural influences co-exist and give a unified definition to the ethnic identity. Bilingual means the capacity to speak two languanges, which may seem almost too obvious to mention. In reality, however, in the bilingual ethnic group, there is often a wide divergence in language competence in both idioms when individuals are considered separately. In a practical context, the term bilingual must refer more generally to the collective; whereas, in the ideal sense, it would apply to each individual within the group. The reason for this disparity goes back to the transference and/or interference principles between the two linguistic codes. Three general effects of this interaction can be noted with regard to the ethnic group: 1. The elimination of the minority linguistic code and the assimilation of the culture markers into the major culture. In American bilingual ethnic groups, it is this minority linguistic feature which is fundamental to the preservation of the ethnic identity. 2. The denigration of linguistic and cultural traits of the ethnic minority as inferior to the general culture. Once again this type of superior/inferior standard is most often directed initially at the linguistic idiom of the bilingual group. 3. The reassertion of ethnic linguistic and cultural traits an positive markers of group identity. For the bilingual community, this implies true bilingualism both educationally and socially for group members.

With these general criteria established, we can now look at the particular case of bilingual, bicultural identity in Southwest Louisiana as it pertains to the French/English community of the "Cajuns." The historical and geographical evolution of the Cajun ethnic group has given them certain unique features that can best be illustrated by a typical question asked of outsiders who visit the geographic region called "Acadiana." "Where are you from?" "I'm from North Louisiana, ... or Texas, ... or any other place outside of Acadiana." "oh, you're an American!" This ancedotal converation says alot about the self-identity of the Cajuns. It also contains the culmination of some unique cultural and historical phenomena that underlie both the strengths and weaknesses of this bilingual ethnic group. It is obvious from the retort, "Oh, you're an American!" that there is traditionally a strong feeling of difference, and by extension isolation, within the Cajun community with regard to the dominant Anglophone culture. Although the French influence has existed in Louisiana since pre-colonial times, the establishment of the present day Cajun community is not directly tied to the colonial influence which is found mainly in the New Orleans area and is directly linked to continental France. The Cajuns descended from the Acadians of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia who began migrating to Louisiana in 1764 after the Grand Dérangement," the expulsion of Acadians from their homes and lands by the English. Since the land along the Mississippi River was already settled, the Acadians moved into the swamp and prairie regions to the West. The inaccessibility of this region to most forms of transportation allowed the Cajuns to remain in relative linguistic and cultural isolation for almost 200 years. French language and traditions brought from Canada were the predominant features of the people and they developed a strong sense of group identity and independance. It was not until the Second World War when young Cajuns were called for military service the the invisible wall around Acadiana began to crumble. Incursion of the anglophone majority came rapidly however with the discovery of oil and natural gas reserves. The Cajuns could no longer retain their previleged position as a totally dominant ethnic and linguistic group. French was banned from use in the newly established public schools and corporal punishment was instituted to ensure the dominance of English - another good example of the prevalent "melting pot" theory in action.

The same geographic isolation which had protected the cajun culture from anglophone interference for so many generations was also the reason for the rapid reduction of the French language upon the eventual arrival of the "Americans." Having had no contact with other francophone countries and regions, the language spoken in Louisiana remained basically unchanged and restricted to the rural social and economic setting. Add to this fact the oral tradition of language and culture transmission since 98% of the ethnic group could neither read nor write French, the establishment of English-speaking public schools assured an inferior, illiterate status for the French language. Although many Cajuns continued to speak French at home, while learning how to read and write English, many succumbed to the liguistic inferiority complex that was being propagated. In these cases, we find the situation common today where one generation speaks almost entirely in French, the next generation has bilingual speaking skills and is literate in English, and the third generation is almost completely mono-lingual (English).

Certainly the rapid decline in bilingual competency does not indicate a complete loss of bicultural identity. Many of the arts (such as music, crafts, and painting), social functions (such as community dances, hog butchering and festivals), the cuisine and indigenous types of work have remained as strong cultural markers that serve to perpetuate the bicultural identity of the Cajuns. However, it has become evident in Louisiana that the real vitality of a bilingual ethnic group is dependent on maintaining bilingual skills within the ethnic community. The language, as a means of expression of the culture, can not be categorically eliminated without weakening group identity since it serves as the most fundamental characteristic of the culture. Cajun music is French. Cajun folklore is told in French. Cajun arts and crafts and trades have been established and delinerated in French. The intangible collective point of view that characterizes the Cajun ethnic group as unique in the spectrum of American culture is French, or at least Louisiana French. Herein lies the importance of bilingualism for all bilingual ethnic groups. English, as the expression of the general American culture, is essential in order for the ethnic group to interact and communicate with the overall culture. The second language, be it French, Spanish, etc., is necessary to maintain and to strengthen the cultural identity of the ethnic group. The loss of bilingual skills must, in some way, alter the ethnic identity of the cultural group and tend towards the group's assimilation into the general anglophone majority.

This fact, which has been widely recoginzed by socio-linguists, forst recieved serious public attention in Louisiana during the 1960's. the culmination of this ethnic awareness was the establishment of CODOFIL by the State Legislature in 1968 - The Council for Development of French in Louisiana. Within the context of a general bilingual, bicultural renaissance, CODOFIL addressed itself to three areas in order to promote the ethnic identity of Cajun culture and language: 1. Public recognition and involvement within the ethnic group as to its own heritage and culture. 2. The establishment of ties with other francophone areas, most notably France, Quebec, Belgium and New Brunswick. 3. A program of education in French within the public school system. In the last ten years, CODOFIL has made amazing advances in the first two areas. A remarkable sense of cultural pride has been restored to the approximately 850,000 French-speaking Cajuns who live in Southwest Louisiana. A renewed interest in their bicultural heritage has also been spawned among the younger generations who, in many cases, were becoming rapidly disassociated from their ethnic identity. Numerous exchanges, visits and dissemination of information through the media have taken place with other francophone countries. The bilingual culture of the Cajuns has quickly achieved an increasingly important position on the international level. There is a great deal of interest, both in Acadiana and abroad, in Cajun culture as a unique expression of general francophone culture.

The third area, that of educational programs, must be considered since it constitutes the essential point in maintaining a truly bilingual ethnic character. CODOFIL's activity in this area was to establish a French teaching program in elementary schools that would meet 3-5 days a week for 30 minute periods. To staff this program, teachers were brought to Louisiana from France, Quebec and Belgium for periods of one or two years, with the cooperation of the two governments involved. It is difficult to evaluate the success of this program with regard to the preservation of the bilingual ethnic chararacter of Cajuns. One important question has arisen from this program, a question to which we have addressed ourselves in our work at the University of Southwestern Louisiana on Cajun French Language and Culture. What is the relationship between and the importance of Standard French and Cajun French within the context of Louisiana Cajun culture?

The two hundred year tradition of oral transmission of French in Louisiana has had many interesting linguistic ramifications as to the existing corpus of Louisiana French today. At the same time, except for small, elite groups in New Orleans (Creoles) and St. Martinville, the French language in Louisiana remained fundamentally isolated from other francophone linguistic groups, while coming into increasing contact with other linguistic groups (German, Italian, West Indian, Spanish, American Indian, English). Such a socio-linguistic phenomenon has had the following effects: maintenance of lexical items and grammatical structures from late 16th century and early 17th century France, leveling of some noun and pronoun genders, incursion of non-French lexical items indigenous to Louisiana linguistic immigrations (particularly from English in the last 40 years), development of syntactical, phonetic and lexical localisations and differences (often within the same immediate community), distinctive intonation and inflection patterns reflecting Spanish and Anglo-American influences, leveling of grammatical structures (simplification of verb conjugasions, ellipsis of some subordinators, negations and interrogatives), vocabulary reductions based on practical and historical usage, restricted use of language predicted on socio-cultural situations and interdictions.

The socio-linguistic evolution of French in Louisiana has been, and is being, traced from three general linguistic perspectives by researchers and historians. The oldest method of investigation, dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, can best be characterized as a type of lexical glossing, both as a localized glossary of one limited sub-variant of Louisiana French (Cajun or Black Creole) and/or a comparative glossary of lexical items between regional sub-variants or in relationship to Acadian French (new Brunswick) and traditional French (France). This type of research has definite historical and etymological value for the establishment of regional and local evolution of Louisiana French, however such findings tend to remain solely within the domains of academic curiosity. Inclusion of such research in a pedagogical methodology remains highly problematic and little, if any, work has been done from these sources in order to grasp the socio-cultural reality of Louisiana French in its contemporary setting.

The second type of dialectic investigation began in the 1920's and 1930's, using linguistic methods as a base for recording, transcribing and analyzing regional usages of French in Louisiana. Most of this research was effected through the academic communities at University of Southwestern Louisiana (Lafayette, LA) and Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, LA) in the form of Master's thesis and Doctoral disserations. A variety of linguistic methods have been employed in this research, ranging from different types of phonetic transcriptions of field recordings and morphosyntactic comparisons to socio-linguistic classifications of language users within particular French-speaking communities. The majority of these studies have limited themselves to a particular local sub-variant of Louisiana French, usually an isolate village or Parish, and have attempted to reproduce the linguistic reality of the area - either as to phonetic structure, morpho-syntactic structure, lexical glossing or statistical usage of the dialect by inhabitants. A very limited number of studies have been made in order to define the general geographic boundaries of French usage in Louisiana, but such findings are usually ambiguous and inconclusive. Once again, this research remains fundamentally hermetic and has not yet resulted in a synthetic considerations of French language usage in the state in a practical vein. The value of such studies depends entirely on the capabilities of the individual researcher, the completeness of the linguistic sampling and the appropriateness of linguistic tools employed in analysis. In most cases to date, one or more of these factors, under close scrutiny, tend to make these studies of questionable validity within the larger context of general dialectic studies.

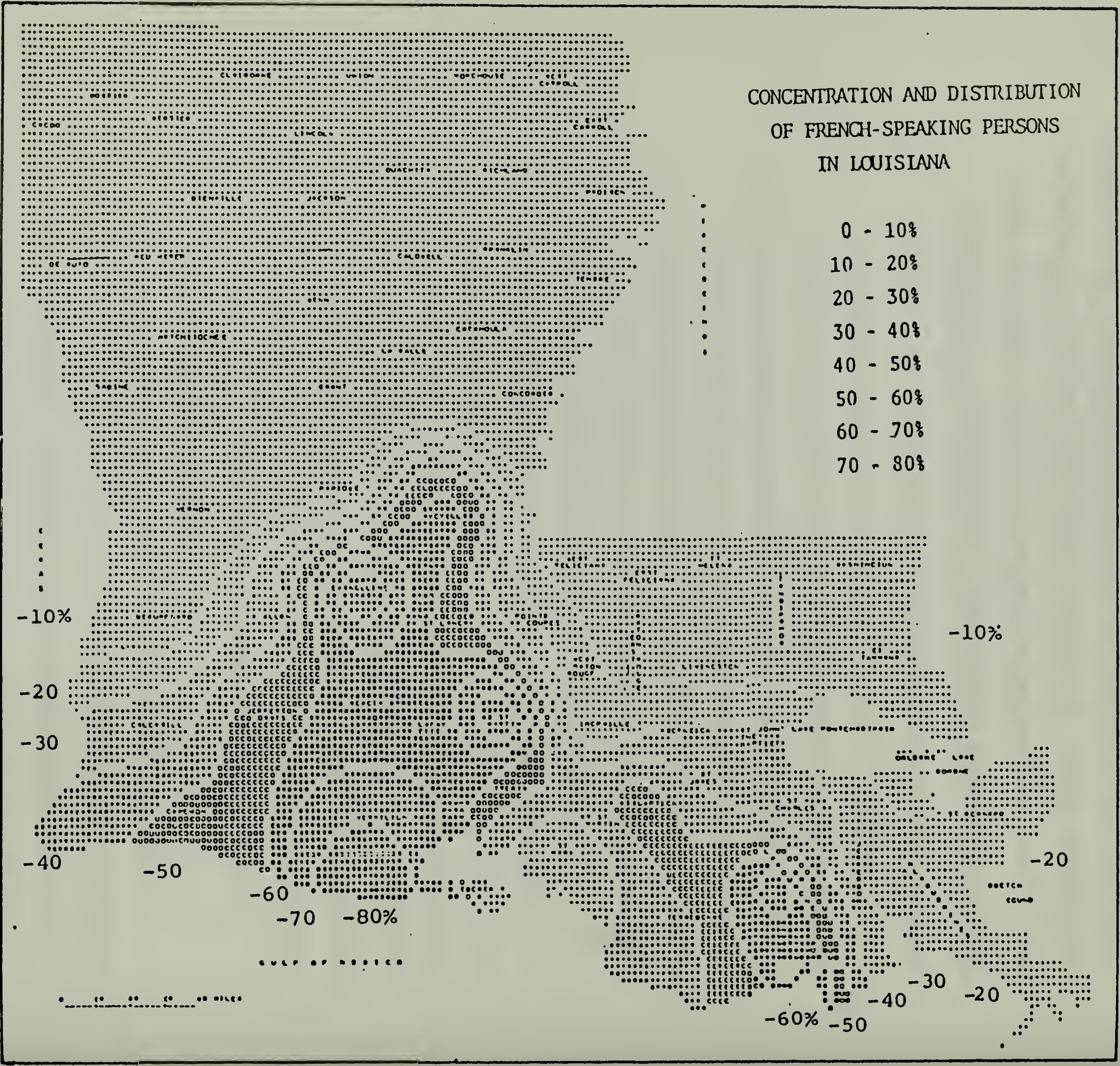
The most recent type of research, begun at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1978 under a federal grant from the Ethnic Heritage Studies Program, has sought to develop a more pragmatic methodoloty within a pedagogical environment. This research has attempted to place the linguistic phenomenon of Louisiana French as an oral tradition within the context of socio-cultural linguistic transmission. In Louisiana today, this implies an educational methodology appropriate to the teaching of French at the various levels of the educational system. The following principles have been adopted in this research in order to satisfy the pragmatic realities of teaching the regional dialects of Louisiana French:

1. A means of transcribing the French language, heretofore a strictly oral language, must be established in order to incorporate the dialect into educational milieus. A gallic orthography has been assumed, based upon the fact that Louisiana French, despite the many lexical phonetic and syntactic variations from traditional French, is fundamentally within the francophone linguistic group.
2. Despite differences in regional and local sub-variants, a logical grammatical structure exists for Louisiana French that can be explicated through a comparison to traditional French grammatical categories. This does not exclude the

possibility of continuing local variants, which can be subsumed within general structures, but it holds that such a grammatical structure must be realized in order to control incursions from other linguistic groups.

3. To adequately create an educational methodoloty for Louisiana French, a combination of a recognizable orthographic system, a phonetic transcription and audio-visual techniques are needed to establish a complete, four-skill pedagogical tool.
4. The linguistic phenomenon itself is firmly rooted in the socio-cultural milieu of Louisiana, linguistic and cultural realities are interrelated and research conducted in one area must take into account the realities of the other. Hence, all such research in the dialect is fundamentally socio-linguistic in nature if it is to have practical, educational application.
5. Similarities, as well as differences, within sub-variants of regional Louisiana French must be formulated if a synthetic view of the dialect is to be achieved. This use of Louisiana French as means of ethnic identity and communication in the generalized cultural community must be underlined as a synchronic linguistic reality.

It should be noted that this third methodology uses both linguistic and historical research as source materials for formulating its materials and that its immediate goal is educational in nature. On the other hand, it envisages the eventual synthesis of localized reasearch into a more generalized overview of French in the region. It is in this educational context that we have been developing materials that reflect the linguistic and cultural specificity of the bilingual Cajun ethnic group. If Bilingual skills that reflect the linguistic and cultural heritage are maintained, the ethnic identity of Cajun culture will define itself within its contemporary surroundings.



CONCENTRATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PERSONS IN LOUISIANA

0 - 10%
10 - 20%
20 - 30%
30 - 40%
40 - 50%
50 - 60%
60 - 70%
70 - 80%
-10%
-20
-30
-40
-50
-60
-70
-80%
-10%
-20
-60%
-50
-40
-30
-20

CONVERSATION

HENRI: Bonjour, Octa. Comment ça se plume? La récolte est bonne?

OCTA: Oui, elle est bien bonne, mais ça va pas faire grand bien quand-même.

HENRI: Pourquoi pas?

OCTA: Parce que le prix est pas là. Ça paie pas de se tuer à travailler pour pas faire de profit.

HENRI: Tu plantes juste du riz?

OCTA: Non, je plante des fèves aussi. Il y a pas moyen de le faire avex une seule récolte. Le riz de plant et les machineries augmentent toujours et on a presque pas rien pour le riz. Il y a moins de dépense avec les féves.

HENRI: Et tu sais que les faiseurs de canne ont le même tracas.

OCTA: Je crois pas qu'il y a récolter qui a pas de la misère à se gagner la vie aufourd'hui. Même les faiseurs de patates se lamentent.

HENRI: Et on peut plus se fier sur les bêtes non plus. Le prix de la viande au marché est effayant, mais ça nous donne pas grand chose à nous-autres pour nos veaux. Et puis, par-dessus le marché, le manger qu'il faut donner aux vaches et aux cochons coûte les yeux de la tête.

OCTA: Oui, ça c'est vrai. Mais tu sais, il faut pas trop se plaindre. Je crois qu'on fait une meilleure vie aujourd'hui que jamais. On a tout le temps plein de quoi à manger et à boire.

HENRI: Ça, ça va jamais manquer parmi les Cadiens. Ils vont toujours trouver le moyen de se débrouiller.

OCTA: Tu sais, dans le vieux temps, il fallait couper du riz à la coupeuse. Ça prenait des journées de temps. Et puis là, il y avait les battages de riz qui duraient deux ou trois jours. Je peux te dire que c'était pas si facile dans ce temps-là.

HENRI: Non, mais les dîners de batteuse étaient assez bons que ça valait la peine.

OCTA: Écoute, en parlant du manger, moi j'ai faim. Allons voir si la femme a cuit quelquechose de bon.

Questions orales:

1. Est-ce la récolte à Octa est bonne?
2. Pourquoi ça va pas faire grand bien?
3. Pourquoi il y a pas moyen de le faire ave'c une seule récolte?
4. Pourquoi ça plante des fèves?
5. Est-ce que tous les habitants ont de la misère à se gagner la vie aujourd'hui?
6. Pourquoi ça peut plus se fier sur les bêtes?
7. Est-ce que le manger des bêtes est à bon marché?
8. Est-ce qu'on fait une vilaine vie aujourd'hui?
9. Comment ça coupait du riz dans le vieux temps?
10. Ça prenait longtemps?
11. Quoi est-ce qui durait deux ou trois jours?
12. Pourquoi ça valait la peine de travailler comme ça?

Structure

Il y a une tendance de simplification dans la conjugaison des verbes chez les Cadiens, mais cette simplification se justifie par la modification des pronoms personnels sujets et elle n'est pas nécessairement gratuite ou dégradée. En plus, le français cadien a ajouté certaines distinctions trés précises quant à l'emploi des pronoms personnels sujets. Les verbes cadiens se groupent, plus ou moins, selon les bonjugaisons du français de France, i.e. infinitifs en -er, -ir, -re avec un quatrième groupe plus réduit en -ir (exemple: partir, sortir, dormir).

LECTURE CULTURELLE

L'habitation

Depuis le plus vieux temps, la Louisiane a toujours été un pays d'agriculture. Ça, ça a pas commencé comme une ouvrage commerciale, mais par des petites habitations au bord des bayous et dans les prairies. Là, chaque famille plantait juste ça que ça avait besoin pour vivre: un peu de coton, du maïs, du jardinage, des patates, du riz et des fruits. Ça gardait aussi quelques bêtes, des cochons, des moutons et des poulets. Quelquefois, il y avait une plus grande récolte de tabac, d'indigio ou de riz pour s'acheter des outils et des choses que les petits habitants avaient besoin. Les petits habitants ont jamais quitté le sud de la Louisiane, mais l'agriculture a changé un tas depuis ce temp-là.

L'arrivée de la canne à sucre de Saint-Domingue à la Nouvelle Orléans en 1751 a causé le premier grand changement dans l'agriculture. Quelques prêtres jésuites ont planté de la canne à sucre près de la grande ville, mais ça a pas trop bien réussi. C'était en 1791, quand Etienne de Boré a construit le premier moulin à sucre sur sa plantation, que la canne à sucre a commencé à être une grande, grande récolte commerciale. Les grandes plantations s'ont avancé tout partout dans la région des Attakapas et Bayou Têche. La canne était plantée à la main par des esclaves noirs et la récolte était faite aussi comme ça avec des couteaux. Puis, ça halait la canne jusqu'au moulin dans les gros wagons tirés par des chevaux ou des mulets. Pour cent ans, la canne à sucre était le seul produit bien important avec des récoltiers de tabac et d'indigo.

Mais le mouvement des nouveaux habitants vers l'oeust préparait le commencement de trois autres ouvrages d'habitation: le riz, le coton et la vacherie. Il y avait des vacheries un peu partout dans le sud de la Louisiane, mais le coton était surtout cultivé à l'oeust et au nord des Opelousas. Le riz était centré au sud-oeust où les clos de riz avaient tout le temps assez d'eau pour couvrir les tiges de riz. Souvent on changeait les récoltes de riz avec le paturage de bêtes, et les récoltes de coton avec le maïs pour enrichir la terre. A ce temps-là, il y avait quand-même encore de la terre ouverte à l'ouest où tout le monde élevait des bêtes et où toute la terre etait pas coupée par des barriéres en pôteaux. La terre était toujours labourée par la charrue halée par des chevaux ou des mulets. Ça fait que les habitations étaient en général pas trop grandes et l'habitant pouvait travailler sa petite terre pour se gagner la vie.

Au vingtième siècle, l'agriculture a fait des grands changements. Plus ça devenait mécanisé, plus il y avait des grands, grands clos de riz et des grandes vacheries. Le coton a proche disparu et ça a été remplacé par les patates, le maïs et les bêtes. Un tas d'Americains ont venu autour de Crowley et, avec quelques Cadiens, ont fait une grosse affaire avec le riz. On a commencé à voir des machines, des faucheuses et des cultivateurs tour partout. La récolte s'a modernisé. Le fil de fer a remplacé les vieux pôteaux et tout chacun avait son habitation à lui. Il y avaait des moulins à gru pour le riz et le maïs et on voyait plus de piles et pilons que parmi les petits habitants. Mais l'habitation et les habitants ont pas changé tout à fait.

Le petit habitant a toujours gardé une place inportante dans l'agriculture Louisianaise. Asteur, il y en a bien peu qui reste tout le temps sur leurs terres et se gagne la vie sans d'autre ouvrage. Mais certaines habitudes comme le coup de main, la piocherie et le couvrage sont encore pratiquées par les habitants. Des vieux outils ont été usés, aussi, bien aprés l'emploi de machines et d'outils modernes. Chaque habitant a toujours son puit d'eau à lui et son platin ou son "trou de taureau" pour les bêtes. Il garde encore quelques bêtes, des poulets et des cochons. Il plante son petit jardin pour la famille et il fait sa récolte de canne à sucre, de riz, de maïs ou de féves. Il se tracasse toujours des sécheresses, des temps de pluie, des mauvaises herbes, des insectes et des maladies des bêtes. Vous-autres se demande quoi il y a de different? Eh bien, asteur la plupart de la récolte est mécanisée. Un petit habitant va travallier souvent en ville ou dans le pétrole aussi bien que son ouvrage de recoltier. Il y a aussi un tas de grands récoltiers qui ont des engagés pour faire de l'ouvrage. Et la féve devient la récolte la plus importante avant la canne à sucre, le riz et le maïs. Ça fait que l'habitation a changé un tas aujourd'hui, mais quelques habitudes et coutumes vont jamais changer. Les Cadiens sont quand-même de monde qui aime la terre et la récolte.

Questions orales et écrites:

1. Comment l'agriculture a commencé en Louisiane?
2. Quoi ça plantait dans ce temps-là?
3. Quoi est-ce qui a causé grand changement dans l'agriculture?
4 Quelle sorte de récolte ça faisait dans l'ouest?
5. Pourquoi ça changeait de récolte parfois?
6. Comment ça labourait la terre?
7. Quoi est-ce qui a arrivé au vingtiéme siécle?
8. Quelle place le petit habitant a gardé dans l'agriculture de la Louisiane?
9. Quelles habitudes sont encore vivantes parmi les habitants?
10. De quoi ça se tracasse toujours?
11. Quoi est-ce qui change aujourd'hui?
12. Quelle sorte de monde les Cadiens sont Quand-même?

Discussions/Rédactions

1. Comment la récolte était dans le vieux temps?

2. Comment l'agriculture a changé?

3. Décris les récoltes des différentes régions de la Louisiane.

4. Imagine-toi que tu es petit habitant. Comment tu vas passer ta journée?

VOCABULAIRE

l'agriculture (f.)
la barriére - la clôture
le battage (de riz)
la batteuse
les bétes - les bestiaux
la blague
la canne à sucre
le char - la voiture
la charrue
le coton
la coupeuse
le couvrage
le cultivateur
la dépense

la faiseur
la faucheuse
les féves (f.)
l'habitant (m.)
l'indigo (m.)
le jardinage
la machinerie
le maïs
le manger
le moulin à sucre
la patate
le paturage
la piocherie
la plantation

le platin
le pôteaux
le prix
la récolte
le récoltier
le riz de plant
la sécheresse
le tabac
la tige
la vacherie
le veau

LOUISIANA FRENCH ORAL TRADITION: An Overview

Barry Jean Ancelet

Background

In the past, Louisiana French oral literature was studied simply for its reflection of French and African cultural origins. In these terms, the search for traditional tales became little more than a search for Old World vestiges. This was certainly due in part to the linguistic particularity of the area as well as to past trends in folklore scholarship which placed a premium on the discovery of long, European-style fairy tales, as collected by the Grimms in Germany, or of animal tales as found in the literary versions of Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus stories. Alcée Fortier's almost exclusive emphasis on the animal tales among New Orleans black Creoles in his landmark 1890s collections stressed the Louisiana/Africa connection. In the 1920s and 1930s, Calvin Claudel and Corinne Saucier sought magic tales and numbskull tales in an attempt to demonstrate the Louisiana/France connection. Like her predecessors, Elizabeth Brandon collected material in the 1940s which focused on the Louisiana/France connection, though she did record other tale genres in quest for thoroughness. The connections do exist; however, to present only the stories which justify these ties blurs the image of Louisiana French oral tradition unnecessarily.

Louisiana is not simply a French or African cultural outpost. Richard M. Dorson points out in Buying the Wind: Regional Folklore in the United States that "distinctively French elements are not as conspicuous as might be expected in the Cajun folklore" (Dorson, 1964: 231). The fact is that the Cajuns and Creoles of Louisiana have less connection to France and Africa and more connection to North America (where they have spent the last three centuries) than idealists like to admit. While it is true that there are interesting parallels which should be explored, the other quite active aspects of Louisiana French folklore should not be neglected.

Alcée Fortier was the first to systematically collect Louisiana French oral tradition toward the end of the nineteenth century. A professor at Tulane University, Fortier was particularly interested in the black Creoles of New Orleans. Louisiana Folk-Tales, his exhaustive collection of Afro-Caribbean style animal tales, is still a basic reference work today. He attempted to faithfully render the language of his storytellers by means of a transcription method located somewhere between literary dialect and linguistics, an exact parallel of the black English rendered by Joel Chandler Harris in his Uncle Remus tales. Fortier was an active folklorist. He founded the New Orleans Folklore Society, which later became the Louisiana Folklore Society, and served as president of the American Folklore Society in 1894.

After Fortier, the study of Louisiana French oral tradition waned until the 1920s when Corinne Saucier took up the banner again. The Americanization of Louisiana launched at the turn of the century was now in full swing. Young Cajuns and Creoles were not even allowed to speak French on the schoolgrounds. It is no wonder that Corinne Saucier was forced to pursue her interests outside the region. In 1923, she completed the Master's degree at George Peabody School for Teachers in

Tennessee with a thesis on Louisiana tales and songs in French dialect. She then continued her education under Luc Lacourcière at Laval University in Quebec. The third volume of her dissertation, "Histoire traditions de la paroisse des Avoyelles en Louisiane," completed in 1949, was a collection of tales. This volume was eventually edited and published posthumously in 1972 in English translation only, under the title Folk Tales from French Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Claitor's). Calvin Claudel, another folklorist of the 1940s and also a native of Avoyelles Parish, completed his dissertation, "A Study of Louisiana French Folktales in Avoyelles Parish," at the University of North Carolina in 1948. Claudel was more active as a folklorist than Saucier. Based on his initial field work he published numerous articles for the Journal of American Folklore, and other scholarly journals. He even collaborated with Joseph Médard Carrière, author of the landmark collection, Tales from the French Folklore of Missouri, on several studies of French American folklore. Both Claudel and Saucier found it necessary to leave Louisiana to complete their studies of it. Elisabeth Brandon, another researcher of the 1940s, came to Louisiana to find material. She completed her degree at Laval under the direction of Lacourcière in 1955, the bicentennial of the Acadian exile. Her dissertation, entited "La Paroisse Vermillon: Moeurs, dictons, contes et légendes," was published in serial form in the journal, Bayou, from 1955 to 1957 (nos. 64 to 69). Several university students, especially at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge under the direction of professors James Broussard, Hoguet Major, and John Guilbeau, collected songs and stories while researching Louisiana's French dialects. These collections were primarily linguistic, using stories only as a source of extended texts for analysis, and did not take into consideration the literary and cultural aspects of the repertoire.

Since the 1930s, ethnomusicologists like Alan Lomax, Harry Oster and Ralph Rinzler have taken an active role in Louisiana. With the help of festivals and school programs, they have succeeded in restoring and recycling traditional music, effecting a veritable cultural renaissance based on contemporary tradition, and not only on remote history. On the other hand, oral tradition researchers did not seek to encourage the preservation of the traditions they studied. With the establishment of CODOFIL in 1968, there was once again an interest in preserving Louisiana's French language. Those involved in this movement quickly understood that a language does not exist in a vaccuum and they made an effort to save the culture that the French language was used to express. In 1974, with the presentation of the first "Hommage a la musique acadienne," CODOFIL officially engaged a corps of musicians in the battle. That same year, in a much quieter vein, CODOFIL also inaugurated a modest collection project to gather stories originally intended for use in a French radio programming effort. This collection was eventually transferred to a new folklore archives established at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1977. Since then, the folklore program at the university has continued the collection, amassing some 600 hours of field recordings.

What is clear from the range of stories collected since 1974 is that Louisiana French oral tradition is alive and well. The devolutionary theories that have long predicted its demise are based on a static view of folk culture. If Louisiana French oral tradition is considered in its own terms, with all of its organic changes, a much more accurate account of it can be made. It is true that the early scholars of Louisiana folklore were working within the current trends of the discipline before the more recent developments in contextual- and performance-oriented approaches. Yet, it is no less true that the limited view of folktales they took with them to the field exacted little more than the animal and fairy tales specifically requested. The interpretation of this as a waning resource inadvertently produced a distorted picture of Louisiana French oral tradition and prematurely rang its death knell. A wider, more open-ended approach shows the tradition to be changed, but still quite rich and healthy into the 1980s.

REPERTOIRE: Vestiges

The repertoire of oral tradition in French Louisiana can be divided into two general categories: vestiges and active oral entertainment. The first includes animal tales and magic tales (marchen), often the only genres represented in past scholarship. These folktales are usually part of the passive repertoire of Louisiana French storytellers. They lack currency and are often heard only by the likes of a persistent folklorist who might ask for them specifically. They are, nevertheless, an important and respected part of French Louisiana's traditional heritage. The tales are immediately recognized as research finds and the tellers of these tales are invariably revered as bearers of tradition. They are known to be storytellers by their neighbors and friends. Folklorists are sent to them with a standard reference: "You ought to go see Mr. X. He knows a lot of old stories."

All examples used in this report are transcribed from the author's collection of taped interviews on deposit in the University of Southwestern Louisiana's Center for Acadian and Creole Folklore. All type numbers refer to Antti Aarne's and Stith Thompson's standard _The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography_, second rev. ed. (Helsinki, 1981).

Animal Tales

Animal tales require that a storyteller and his/her audience accept certain conventions _a priori_. The essential element in this oral genre is that animals take on human characteristics. They can speak and reason, weep and laugh. This kind of characterization often involves a simplification of roles. Each animal can become the incarnation of a human trait: ruse (the rabbit, the fox, the turtle), stupidity (the wolf, the bear, _Bouki_), evil (the spider, the monkey), brute strength (the elephant, the lion). By symbolizing characters in this way, the storyteller can often indirectly criticize his society without mentioning names.

Louisiana French tales which cast animals as characters are generally from two sources. Some resemble fables in the French tradition of the _fabliaux_ and the _roman de renard_. It is possible that some of these came from teachers reading the fables of La Fontaine to entertain schoolchilden. Some of these eventually entered oral tradition when they were remembered and retold by those children after they were grown and had children of their own. Some of these even include a mild moral statement at the end, reminiscent of their origins. The moral of the following tale, a variant of type 59 The Fox and the Sour Grapes, found in Aesop's and La Fontaine's classic collections of fables, is very well known, but the tale itself has not been widely collected. In this Louisiana version, the moral is obvious, but left unspoken.

Le Renard et le raisin (Evélia Boudreaux; Carencro)

Le renard était dans le bois où ils habitent et, toujours, il avait beaucoup faim. Et il était après chercher pour trouver du manger. Et il a vu des belles grappes de raisins haut d'un arbre. Et il s'est dit à lui-même, "Ça serait beaucoup bon, ce raisin. J'aimerais beaucoup d'en manger. Il est un peu haut. Je vais essayer de sauter et essayer de l'attraper."

Et il sautait et il sautait, mais il venait pas près du raisin, et il s'est découragé.

Il dit, "Je peux pas l'attraper. Ou," il dit, "je le veux pas quand même." Il dit, "Il est trop aigre, quand même." Il dit, "Je le veux pas."

Et il est parti. Il s'en a été.

Easily the most popular animal tales in Louisiana are those in the Bouki and Lapin cycle. These tales have origins in the French fabliaux, but their most stunning origins are African. The name of the foil character, Bouki, means "hyena" in the Oualof dialect of Senegal, where that animal is cast in the same role opposite the more clever hare. Bouki and Lapin have counterparts in West Indian (Bouki, Malice, Macaque, Anansi, or Nancy and Lapin or Rabbit) and black American (Brer Fox and Brer Rabbit) traditions. There are other minor characters, including the elephant, the snake, the cat, the dog, and the turtle. It is interesting to note that, despite French Louisiana's obvous cultural connection with the West Indies, the spider is unknown among the Cajuns and Creoles.

In French Louisiana, there was a great deal of cultural contact between black Creoles and white Cajuns and these stories are told by members of both groups. The following tale is a variant of type 47A The Fox Hangs by His Teeth to the Horse's Tail, often told to explain the origin of the harelip (hare laughs so hard at his duped victim that he splits his lip). This type which seems to be especially popular in the black tradition, with versions reported from Africa, the West Indies and the South, has also entered Cajun tradition as illustrated in this version by a white Cajun storyteller from St. Martin Parish, an area heavily influenced by black Creole culture.

Tiens bien, Bouki (Martin Latiolais; Catahoula)

Tu vois, il y a un joke pour Bouki et Lapin aussi... Ils étaient à la chasse dans le bois. Et, ça fait ils ont vu un ours après dormir, couché aprés dormir. Ça fait, Lapin (il bluffait tout le temps Bouki, tu vois), il dit à Bouki, "Attrape sa queue!"

Ça fait, Bouki a parti. En peu de temps, il approchait l'ours. Il a

fait un tour après la queue. Ça a réveillé l'ours, il y a pas de doute. L'ours a parti avec.

Lapin était à côté, il disait, "Tiens bon, Bouki! Tiens bon, Bouki!"

Il dit, "Comment tu veux moi, je tiens bon, mes quatre pattes, elles touchent pas par terre!"

D'après moi, l'ours était aprés courir manière vite. Bouki, il touchait pas par terre!

The best known animal tale of this sort is the classic "tarbaby" story, made famous by Joel Chandler Harris in his Uncle Remus collection. In this Louisiana French version, told by master Creole storyteller Ben Guiné, the rabbit is caught and does not escape in this story, just like in Harris' version. Like in the literary version, however, few stories later, it was clear that Lapin had indeed escaped because he was up to his old tricks again.

Le petit n-homme en _coal tar_ (Ben Guiné; Parks)

Ouais, mais Bouki té gain un jardin. Li acheté un homme, et fait un petit n-homme en _coal tar_ dans le milieu du jardin.

Ah, _well_, Bouki vient, li gardé comme ça-là. Lapin vient, li gardé comme ça-là. Li hélé li, li dit, "Qui c'est ça, ci-là?"

A rien répond pas.

"O!" li dit, "c'est bligé d'être quelque chose de malicieux que Bouki rangé moi," li dit, "M'alé couri apé li, n-homme.

Quand il a arrivé là-là, il sacré gaillard-là un coup de poing. "Kabô!" Ça, c'était les jambes en bas, vous comprends? Li dit, "Moi dis toi lâcher moi, moi té toi!"

C'est comme ça!

"Moi dis toi lâcher moi, moi gain l'autre oui! Moi dis toi lâcher moi, moi gain l'autre, oui! Li piqué un autre coup encore! Li lâchait pas, li restait collé! Li restait collé! Li... Là, li voyé la tête, tout quelque chose restait collé comme ça-là.

Ah ouais, mais Bouki toujours resté en arrière. Lapin sorti devant.

RG: Mais cette fois-là-là, Bouki sorti en avant!

BG: Ouais, mais, li sorti en avant, mais li tient bon li, vous comprends ça? Bien là, c'était temps pour trapé Lapin, vous comprends? C'était passé. C'était temps pour traper li! C'est pas une affaire, non. Pas jouer avec Lapin, non!

A closely related type of animal tale is the origin myth told to explain certain features of nature. The following, for example, a version of type 200 The Dog's and Rabbit's Checks, is told to explain why dogs chase rabbits to this day. It is interesting to note that the storyteller, a black Creole from Lafayette, speaks Cajun French throughout most of the story, but shifts into his native Creole when transmitting dialogue.

Le Chien et le lapin (Norris Mitchell; Scott)

Ça, c'est pour le chien et le lapin. Ils étaient des grands amis dans le temps. Ça fait, ils ont été ensemble. Il y a un homme qui les a engagé les deux. Ils ont travaillé. Ça fait, l'homme les a payé chacun leur chèque. Et ils ont parti.

Ils ont arrivé ayoù il y avait une rivière pour passer. Le chien lui dit, "Lapin, comment on va passer sur de l'eau-là?"

Lapin dit, "Mets ton chèque en bas ta queue et puis nage jusqu'à l'autre bord."

Ça fait, le chien le regarde, il dit, "Comment tu dis ça?"

Ça fait, Lapin a fait comme ça. Lapin a mis son chèque et lui, il a mis le sien et ils ont parti à nager. Mais là, il y avait une lame d'eau qui vini. Une lame d'eau qui les a foutu dedans. Ça fait, il a été voir s'il pouvait trouver son chèque mais il était _gone_. L'eau avait pris son chèque.

Lapin était là-bas. Il dit, "Dépêche-toi!"

Ça fait, il a parti derrière Lapin, mais Lapin était sur la butte. Le chien dit, "Tu connais mon affaire? Mo perdu mo chèque!"

"O," Lapin dit, "gros sacré imbécile! Mo dit toi mettre-le en bas to la-queue. Là, de l'eau sé pas prendre ton chèque. Mais," il dit, "ça, c'est une affaire quand même!" Lapin, lui, il a _gone_ et Lapin a la queue blanche. Ça fait, Lapin a levé sa queue et puis il a _gone_.

Il a regardé Lapin, il dit, "Tu connais une affaire? C'est lui qui a volé mon chéque!" Et il a parti aprés.

Et c'est pour ça il course Lapin jusqu'à asteur.

Animal tales have been well collected in Louisiana in the past, but today they have faded from the repertoire. They can still be heard in some areas by persistent researchers, especially in the parishes east of Lafayette (St. Martin, Iberia and St. Landry) where Creole culture is strong, and much less so in the predominantly Acadian and _petit_

Creole parishes on the southwestern prairies. Even when a teller of animal tales can be found, one must ask for them to hear them. These stories which were once apparently quite popular among adult audiences seem now to be relegated to children and tenacious folklorists.

Formula Tales

The formula tale is a related genre in which not only animals, but objects as well may speak and act as humans. It too is rare, but the verbal play required of the teller seems to have made this kind of story a favorite among grandparents and teachers who like to amaze children with these verbal fireworks. The following story, a variant of type 2031 Seeking the Strongest, is remarkable example of this tradition.

Neige casse la patte de la froumi (Inez Catalon; Kaplan)

Neige casse la patte de la froumi. Elle dit, "Neige, neige, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu casses ma patte?"

Neige dit, "Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le soleil me fend."

Elle dit, "Soleil, soleil, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu fends neige, neige casse ma patte?

Soleil dit, "Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le nuage me couvre."

Elle dit, "Nuage, nuage, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu couvres soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le vent me pousse."

"Vent, vent, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu pousses nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le mur me guette."

"Mur, mur, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu guettes vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le rat me perce."

"Rat, rat, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu perces muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le chat me tue."

"Chat, chat, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu tues rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le chien me tue."

"Chien, chien, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu tues chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le bâton me tue."

"Bâton, bâton, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu tues chien, chien tue chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le feu me brûle."

"Feu, feu, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu brûles bâton, bâton tue chien, chien tue chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. L'eau m'éteint."

"Eau, eau, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu éteins feu, feu brûle bâton, bâton tue chien, chien tue chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le boeuf me boit."

"Boeuf, boeuf, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu bois eau, eau éteint feu, feu brûle bâton, bâton tue chien, chien tue chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. Le cable me tient."

"Cable, cable, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu tiens boeuf, boeuf boit eau, eau éteint feu, feu brûle bâton, bâton tue chien, chien tue chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'est si fort que ça. L'arbre me tient."

"Arbre, arbre, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu tiens cable, cable tient boeuf, boeuf boit eau, eau éteint feu, feu brûle bâton, bâton tue chien, chien tue chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. La racine me tient."

"Racine, racine, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça, tu tiens arbre, arbre tient cable, cable tient boeuf, boeuf boit eau, eau éteint feu, feu brûle bâton, bâton tue chien, chien tue chat, chat tue rat, rat perce muraille, muraille guette vent, vent pousse nuage, nuage couvre soleil, soleil fend neige, neige casse ma patte?"

"Non, c'est pas moi qu'es si fort que ça. La terre me tient."

"Terre, terre, c'est toi qu'es si fort que ça..."

"Oui! C'est moi qu'es si fort que ça!

Magic Tales

The fast pace of modern life has gradually eroded the popularity of the magic tale. This genre, filled with kings and castles, princes and princesses, fabulous treasures and impossible tasks, heros and horrors, tends to be multi-episodic and long. These stories flourished in the days before radio and television, when families and friends filled the long evenings with stories and songs. These days, people don't have the time to listen to such oral masterpieces. Consequently, the magic tale has been replaced by shorter forms like the joke and the tall tale which can be told in passing, without missing a beat. Today these long stories are heard almost exclusively by specialists in oral tradition who have to look long and hard to find them. Even so, they are always impressive when encountered in the field. They often show clear connections to European tradition, yet are invariably adapted to the Louisiana experience. In the following tale, a variant of type 513B The Land and Water Ship, a typically French and Franco-American hero, Jean l'Ours, is aided by his marvelous companions to eventually win the hand of the princess and the riches of the kingdom. He proves to be a

gracious winner, giving the king his special possessions in return, and a lake to fish in during the king's "retirement." Reported by the Grimms (nos. 71 and 134), this tale is popular in French and Franco-American tradition. It is also known in Africa where it is told with animal characters.

Jean l'Ours et la fille du roi (Elby Deshotels; Rydell)

Je suis surement pas un conteur de contes, mais j'ai appris des contes, quand j'étais petit avec mon père et ma mère. Et mon papa, c'était un chanteur et c'était un raconteur de contes. Son nom, c'était Marcellus Deshotels. Et dans ce temps-là ils aviont pas beaucoup des affaires à faire d'autre chose que d'assir et se conter des contes. Et moi, j'ai appris une partie des contes. Et il y a un conte il contait, c'était pour Jean l'Ours et la fille du Roi.

Le Roi était beaucoup, beaucoup riche. Il était millionnaire un tas de fois. Et il était beaucoup jaloux, beaucoup jaloux. Il avait une belle fille. Elle avait des grands cheveux jaunes, et les yeux bleus. Et il quittait pas personne parler avec sa fille. Et il avait tout le temps dit qu'il aurait fallu que quelqu'un la gagne pour la marier.

Et il y avait un jeune homme, son nom, c'était Jean l'Ours. Et il a déménagé au ras de chez le Roi un jour. Et Jean l'Ours avait beaucoup de la capacité. Et il était beaucoup glorieux de ça il avait. Il avait les plus beaux cochons il y avait. Tout ça Jean l'Ours avait, c'était le meilleur. Et il croyait qu'il avait le meilleur coureur il y avait. Et dans son organisation, il avait le Grand Coureur, le Grand Tireur, le Grand Souffleur, et le Grand Crieur...et le Bon Entendeur; il entendait beaucoup bien.

Ça se fait, un jour la fille du Roi a été, elle s'est baignée. Il y avait un beau lac, et elle allait les après-midi; elle s'est baignée. Et Jean l'Ours approchait, et il a tiré des pierres après.

Elle lui dit, "Jean l'Ours, je connais c'est toi qu'es là. Mais," elle dit, "si mon père t'attrape, il va couper ton cou!"

Il dit, "Je suis venu ici, la fille du Roi, pour te demander pour me marier." Il dit, "Je t'ai pas jamais vue, mais je connais que t'es réellement une belle fille." Il dit, "Je veux te marier."

Ça se fait, un jour, il y a eu un encan de cochons, et le Roi a arrivé avec une belle bande de cochons. Et il a commencé à dire comment ses cochons étaient beaux, et comment ils estiont gros, ils estiont ci, ils estiont ça. Et Jean l'Ours lui a dit, "Mon Roi, c'est pas des beaux cochons que vous avez." Il dit, "Vous devriez voir les miens."

Ça se fait, il l'a invité, et le Roi a été, et surement ceux à Jean l'Ours étaient un tas plus beaux que les siens.

Et un jour, il a rejoint le Roi dans le bois, il était à la chasse. Et Jean l'Ours avait tué deux gros chevreuils. Et le Roi avait pas de rien. Il avait pas tué rien. Il dit à le Roi, "Si t'aurais des chiens de chasse, des taïaux comme ça moi, j'ai, tu pourrais tuer un chevreuil."

Le Roi dit, "J'ai les meilleurs taïaux il y a qui chassent."

Ça se fait, Jean l'Ours a lâché ses taïaux, et dans peu de temps, ils ont ramené un chevreuil, et ils l'ont tué. Et il dit à le Roi, "J'aimerais marier ta fille."

Le Roi dit, "Jean l'Ours, tu peux pas marier ma fille. Ça prendrait des mille et des millions de piastres, et des bijouteries, et tout ça qu'il y aurait dans le monde, pour ma fille.

Jean l'Ours, il dit à le Roi, "Je vas te parier que mon coureur peut courir plus vite que le tien." Et le Roi avait le plus beau coureur, le plus vite il y avait. Il pouvait courir vite comme le vent. C'était un grand sauvage.

Ça se fait, un jour, ils ont eu un rendez-vous. Ils ont fait un rendez-vous et Jean l'Ours avait amené tous ses hommes avec lui. Il faulait ça court cinq cents milles. Ça se fait, Jean l'Ours avait son Grand Coureur, et le Roi avait son Grand Sauvage.

C,a se fait, quand le pistolet a craqué, le Grand Sauvage a parti loin devant le coureur à Jean l'Ours. Et dans l'après-midi tard, ils ont vu le sauvage qu'était après revenir et ça voyait pas l'homme à Jean l'Ours. Ça se fait, Jean l'Ours a appelé son Bon Entendeur. Il lui dit, "Mets ta tête sur la terre, peut-être tu vas l'entendre. Il est peut-être après dormir."

Ça se fait, le Bon Entendeur a mis sa tête par terre. Il dit, "Je peux pas l'entendre. Il y a trop de train." Il dit, "L'herbe est après élever." C,a se fait, il a été dans le brûlé, ayoû il y avait pas d'herbe. Il a mis sa tête, il dit, "Je l'entends, il est après ronfler."

Ça se fait, il dit à Bon Tireur, "Grimpe dans la tête du grand pin, et vois si tu peux le voir." Ça se fait, il a grimpé dans le grand pin; il l'a vu. Il avait sa tête dessus un noeud de bois gras. Et il a pris sa mire, il était au dessus de deux cents milles. Il a pris sa bonne mire avec sa grande carabine; il a tiré et il a òté le noeud de bois gras dessous la tête du Grand Coureur.

Et le Grand Crieur, il a crié, "Le sauvage est après venir si vitement. C'est l'heure. Faut tu viens."

Et l'homme à Jean l'Ours a parti pour courir, mais il avait son Bon Souffleur avec lui. Avant le sauvage a arrivé, il dit à Bon Souffleur, "Ecoute, tu pourrais pas nous souffler une mer," il dit, "quelque chose pour l'arrêter?"

Il dit, "_Well_, il est assez au ras," il dit, "faudra je souffle juste dedans une narine parce qu'il y aura un tremblement de terre et," il dit, "je vas tout tuer tout le monde il y aura alentour d'icitte." Ça se fait, il a mis son doigt sur un bord de son nez et il a soufflé dans une narine, et ça a fait une crevasse qu'avait des mille de pieds de creux. Et les pierres et tout ça, ça tombait.

Il dit à son Grand Souffleur, "Resouffle," il dit, "une petite orage, un ouragan, pour l'empêcher d'arriver." En même temps, le Grand Coureur à Jean l'Ours a cassé la ligne, ils estiont moins qu'un demi-pouce de différence, mais il avait gagné.

Ça se fait, Jean l'Ours était planté. La fille du roi, elle est venue, elle s'est envoyée dedans ses bras. Elle dit, "Jean l'Ours, tu m'as gagnée. Je suis pour toi. T'as tout mon amour."

Ça se fait, le Roi, il a dit, "Jean L'Ours, faudra tu viens avec moi à la maison." Il dit, "J'ai des choses je veux te donner." Ça se fait, il l'a amené dans sa maison. Et il l'a amené dans une grande chambre qu'il y avait beaucoup, beaucoup des valises tout le tour de la chambre. Et il a ouvert ces valises, et ils estiont pleins des bijouteries, des rubis, et tout ça qu tu peux t'imaginer qui valait des millions et des millions de piastres. Il dit, "Jean l'Ours, je te donne ça." Et il dit, "Je te donne mon castle." Et il dit, "Je te donne tout ce que j'ai; c'est pour toi."

Et Jean l'Ours, il a dit, "Je vous remercie pour ça que vous m'as donné, mais," il dit, "j'ai quelque chose que je veux vous donner, moi aussitte." Ça se fait, il lui a donné ses chiens. Il lui a donné ses boeufs. Il lui a donné ses cochons. Et il lui a donné une grosse rivière pour lui pêcher dedans. Et Jean l'Ours avait la fille du Roi.

Ça, c'est la finition du conte à Jean l'Ours et la fille du Roi.

Some magic tales have partially disintegrated from disuse. The following tale, a fragment of type 301A The Quest for the Princess, is perhaps one of the most widely known stories in the world. It was collected by the Grimms and is well known in French and Creole traditions throughout the world. The descent of the hero into the hole is at least as old as the Old English tale "Beowulf." Except for the princess herself, this Louisiana version has most of the essential elements of the story, including the reemergence from the land at the bottom of the hole on the wings of a bird of prey which requires meat to be able to fly the hero out of the hole. Eventually the hero is forced to cut a piece of his own flesh when he runs out of sheep to feed the bird. This short account is all that remains of a story which was once probably much longer.

Barbe-Bleue et Barbe-Rouge (Lazard Daigle; Pointe Noire)

Il y avait deux hommes, Barbe-rouge et Barbe-bleue, des hommes avec des grandes barbes. Ils s'aviont battu. Il y avait un qui avait battu l'autre. Barbe-bleue s'avait fait battre. Et il avait de la grande barbe.

Ça fait, Barbe-rouge l'a pris et il lui a séparé la barbe et l'a passée par dessus d'une branche dans un arbre et l'a amarrée. Et il avait les mains d'amarrées et les pieds d'amarrés, et la barbe amarrée après l'arbre. Il était pendu en haut-là.

Il s'a débattu, débattu jusqu'à qu'il a tombé. Il s'a dépris. Et il avait peur de l'autre. Il s'a fourré dans un trou dans la terre et quand il a été dans le trou, il s'a aperçu qu'il était dans un autre pays-là. Et il a resté un bout de temps, puis là, l'ennui l'a pris. Il était seul. Il voulait s'en revenir, mais il pouvait pas, parce qu'il avait pas moyen de sortir. Il lui aurait fallu des ailes d'oiseau pour sortir.

Ça fait, il y avait un gros, gros, gros z-oiseau qui restait là. Et il a été joindre le z-oiseau. Le z-oiseau lui a dit, "Ouais je peux te sortir, mais ça va prendre de quoi. Il faudra tu me donnes à manger. Ça va prendre cent moutons."

Ça fait, il y avait des moutons alentour, dans ce gros trou, dans ce pays-là. C,a fait, il a tué cent moutons et il les a amarrés de quelque manière et puis ça a parti.

En allant en haut, à tout moment, le z-oiseau disait, "Donne-moi du mouton!" Et il lui passait un morceau de mouton, et "Donne-moi du mouton!" Quand il a arrivé en haut, il y avait plus de moutons. Juste

pas assez de moutons pour le sortir. Il a fallu qu'il se coupe un morceau après sa jambe à lui pour le dernier morceau. Autrement il l'aurait réchappé.

Active Oral Tradition

When Corinne Saucier concluded her introduction to Folk Tales from French Louisiana with the statement that that collection of thirty-three stories was small, but "representative...of our Southern Louisiana form of oral literature known as folklore, a heritage that is disappearing in our mechanized age" (Saucier 1972; 15), she was thinking of oral tradition in narrow terms. The Louisiana/Old World connection, so important to past Louisiana scholarship, may now be fading, but oral tradition in general certainly is not. It has evolved, following the American trend, in the direction of the shorter joke form, the tall tale, and the "true" experience story, which fall into the second category: active oral entertainment. Tellers of these stories are not always revered; more often, they are taken for granted, even tolerated, and their stories considered nonsense. Yet these are the modern jesters who provide their community with important social needs: laughter within their own contexts and self-criticism through humor. Their tales occur naturally and spontaneously, without solicitation and even despite protests. They thrive in bars and barbershops, outside church services and service stations, at wakes and cake sales, wherever people gather. If these genres are included in the description of Louisiana French oral tradition, then the folklore of the region has adapted to the mechanized age and is in no danger of disappearing. On the contrary, the Cajuns and Creoles esteem and encourage good tellers and "liars." One can hardly avoid hearing, in groups of two or more French-speakers, "t'as entendu le conte pour..." ("Have you heard the one about...")

Jokes

The joke is by far the most popular oral genre in Louisiana. Like most Americans, Cajuns and Creoles delight in telling these short, funny stories. They have not suffered the negative influences of mass media and continue to animate nightly visits and gatherings of all sorts. Often Louisiana jokes are localized versions of internationally known stories, but early scholars showed little interest in them, perhaps because they offered little overt evidence of Louisiana's French or African past. Yet, they are a living testimony to the French fact in Louisiana because they are told in French by choice, often despite their origins in Anglo-American tradition.

If one allows jokes in the oral repertoire, it can hardly be said to be disappearing. Even surrounded by computers and televisions, people seem to feel the need to tell stories. They have adapted their repertoire and their style to survive the dizzying pace of modern times and they continue to relate quick jokes which can include reflections of their cultural heritage which are just as interesting as the more venerable genres. Jokes can be expanded by good talkers with a little time on their hands almost to the length of magic tales.

One of the most popular characters in Louisiana French joke-lore is the small, but clever trickster who succeeds in extracting himself from difficult situations by means of his wit and ruse, always taking care to avoid a direct confrontation. In the following tale, involving

motifs J613 "Wise fear of the weak" and J814.4 "Flattery of the wicked to escape death at his hands," the hero prudently gets over his anger when he finds himself faced with an adversary much larger than he expected when he made his open challenge.

La Jument verte (Felix Richard; Cankton)

Ils m'ont dit, à Church Pointe, il y avait arrivé, des années passées, c'est comme je te dis, il y avait du monde là qui avait des coeurs. Et il y avait un bougre, un vieux garçon. Il avait jamais essayé à sortir, parce que son père, il continuait à l'écharlanter.

"Ecoute, garçon. T'aurais un goût d'aller au bal, et t'aurais un goût de rencontrer des filles, peut-être te choisir une fille pour ta femme, mais," il dit, "écoute. C'est pas tout ça, non. T'as pour avoir assez de quoi, quand tu vas te rencontrer une dame, en tout cas tu te décides de te marier, peut-être pas longtemps après." Il dit, "Quoi c'est que tu vas soigner cette femme-là avec? T'as pour avoir de quoi pour avoir une femme. T'as pour avoir un cheval et un boggué, ça c'est sûr, et," il dit, "t'as pour avoir de l'argent. Ça fait, tu peux pas aller te marier avec les poches vides."

Ça fait, il a écouté son père et il était derrière pour se faire de l'argent. Il pouvait pas rentrer sa récolte assez vite. C'était mettre ça à la banque et puis il la comptait souvent. Et un de ces jours, il allait venir à en avoir assez, et il pourrait aller au bal.

Ça fait, il était rendu vieux garçon. Encore dans le temps, l'argent était rare. Il pouvait pas s'en trouver un tas. Il travaillait tout ça il pouvait, sur tous les côtés. Quand il avait pas d'ouvrage chez lui, il travaillait à faire des fossés, et le diable et ses cornes.

Ça fait, un bonjour, il y a quelqu'un de ses partners qui lui, "Ecoute, voir. Moi, je crois t'es après manquer le show." Il dit, "Quand tu vas t'apercevoir, t'es après écouter ton papa-là, c'est bon. O, c'est une belle chose. C'est rare les enfants qui écoutent leur père, d'une certaine manière, aussi bien que ça. Mais, écoute. Il y a une limite dans cette affaire. Mais," il dit, "tout à l'heure, tu connais quoi ce qui va arriver? Tu seras rendu trop vieux, quand tu vas aller au bal, c'est des jeunes filles qui restent-là." Il dit, "Les vieilles sont toutes parties. Il y a quelqu'un qui les a pris. Ça fait, toutes celles-là qui seront là seront un tas plus jeunes que toi. Quelle c'est, tu crois, qui voudra de toi? Tu seras trop vieux. Tu pourras pas t'en trouver une. Ça fait," il dit, "écoute. Avant tu manques le bateau, tu ferais mieux venir au bal, et puis c'est comme ça que tu vas trouver une femme."

Ça fait, lui, naturellement, il était pas comme ces jeunes petits bougres-là qui allaient au bal sur un ride ou quelque chose comme ça. Lui, il avait son boggué neuf. Et puis, il avait une belle bêtaille noire. Ça sortait pas de l'écurie, cette affaire. Ça fait qu'il a décidé d'aller au bal à la pointe. Il a été bonne heure, juste après le soleil couché. Ça fait, il y avait un poteau de lumière dehors qui était allumé. Et il a figuré, "Well, je vas mettre mon boggué là, et ma bêtaille en bas de la lumière-là. Ça fait, je suis sûr il y a rien qui va les toucher. Il y a des constables ici. Aller mettre mon boggué dans le noir là-bas, eux peut massacrer mon boggué. Quelqu'un peut couper le topou..." tu connais.

Ça fait, pour être sûr que rien arrive, il l'amarre au poteau ayoû la lumière était. Ça fait, quelqu'un est arrivé, ils ont vu cette belle bêtaille et ce beau bogguê. Ils avaient jamais vu ça, tu connais. Il y en avait, des bons bogguês, mais ça avait pas de bogguê, pas comme lui. Bougre-là, un petit brin de poussière et il fallait il le lave.

Ça fait, tout à l'heure, il s'avait amené une topette, tu connais, dans le bas du bogguê. Dans le temps, c'était du moonshine et tu pouvais pas boire ça dans la salle. Pas proche! Et il avait chaud dans la salle. Il était après avoir un bon temps. Ça fait, il décide il aurait été dehors et puis se ramasser un petit coup de ce moonshine il avait, et puis voir à sa bêtaille et son bogguê. Il arrive là-bas. Eux avaient peint sa jument verte avec de la peinture. Non, mais, monde, monde, monde! Quand il a vu ça, ça l'a foutu en feu, tu vois.

Ça fait, il revient dans la salle. Il monte sur la table de musiciens. Il arrête la musique. Il lève ses deux mains en l'air. Il a commencé à annoncer qu'il pouvait pas voir dans le monde qui dans le tonnerre qu'avait fait ce qu'ils avaient fait avec sa bêtaille, droit là, à bic-à-blanc en bas de la lumière. Il dit que quelqu'un a venu peindre sa bêtaille vert. Il dit, "Qui-ce qui aurait fait ça?" Et puis il se cognait l'estomac, tu connais, comme s'il avait devenu un taureau tout du coup.

Tout à l'heure, il s'en vient un bougre en travers de la salle qui avait la chemise déboutonnée avec le jabot grand ouvert, avec les culottes qui étaient aprés pendre un peu bas et il avait le mouchoir juste manière enfoncé dans sa poche. Il vient au ras de la table de musiciens-là. Il avait son estomac plein de crins, tu comprends. Il se cogne dans l'estomac comme ça. Il dit, "C'est moi le boulé qui a peint la jument." Il dit, "Quoi ce que t'as pour dire pour ça?"

"Mais," il dit, "j'ai venu pour te dire qu'elle est sèque. Elle est parée pour une seconde couche."

Usually the joke is much quicker, based on a clever or absurd retort.

Les Oeufs craqués (Adley Gaudet; Bayou Pigeon)

Il y avait une femme dans Lafayette. Elle a été à la grocerie. Elle dit à Monsieur Viator, elle lui a demandé voir combien est-ce qu'il vendait ses oeufs. Il dit, "Trente-cinq sous la douzaine pour les bons, mais," il dit, "les massacrés, ceux-là qui sont craqués, c'est vingt-cinq sous la douzaine."

Elle dit, "Comment ça serait de m'en craquer trois ou quatre douzaines?"

An obvious reflection of Louisiana's French heritage is found in jokes based on French language puns. The following story is based on the confusion o of the homonym phrases: "le fer," the iron, and "le faire," to do it. This is an obviously available French language pun; variants of this story are told in France, Belgium, Quebec, and New Brunswick.

Le Fer dans le lit (Evélia Boudreaux; Carencro)

Une fois, il y avait une vieille fille et elle avait fini par trouver à se marier. Et c'était une excitation beaucoup dans la maison! La vieille maman était veuve et elle voulait sa fille trouve à se marier, mais ça prenait du temps.

Ça fait, finalement, le jour a arrivé pour le mariage. Après le mariage, ils ont eu la célébration. L'heure était arrivée pour les mariés aller à leur chambre. La maman savait que sa fille avait tout le temps les pieds froids. Et elle avait l'habitude de chauffer un fer à repasser et le mettre dans son lit, pour réchauffer ses pieds le soir. Ça fait, la maman voulait d'être vaillante et bonne pour la fille. Elle a chauffé le fer, et elle l'a mis dans le lit. Mais le marié s'est aperçu du fer dans le lit. Et il connaissait pas quoi c'était. Il a levé les couvertes, et il a trouvé le fer. Et il a demandé à la mariée pourquoi le fer était dans le lit. Elle a dit, "Pour réchauffer mes pieds." Elle dit, "Mes pieds sont tout le temps si froids."

Mais la maman, tellement elle était excitée, avait l'oreille à la porte pour écouter quoi qu'allait dans la chambre des mariés. Et tout d'un coup, le marié a jeté le fer par terre, en disant à la mariée, "Tu as plus besoin le fer pour réchauffer tes pieds!"

La maman dit, "Qu'est-ce que c'est ce train?"

Elle dit, "Maman, il veut pas le fer dans le lit!"

"Mais," elle dit, "mais, chère, si il veut pas le faire dans le lit, fais par terre!"

Other jokes reflect the Cajuns' and Creoles' cultural heritage more indirectly. The following story is a version of the internationally type 1476 The Prayer for a Husband which usually includes a young trouble maker who overhears the maid's prayer and puts her through several ridiculous tests. She, thinking his is the voice of God or a saint, complies. In a version from Quebec, the old maid prays at the foot of St. Joseph's statue. Upon hearing the voice of the young trickster, she jumps onto the statue of St. Joseph, causing it to fall on her, to which she exclaims, "Débarque donc, St. Joseph. T'es pire qu'un jeune!" ("Get off, St. Joseph. You're worse than the boys!") This irreverent response comes from the very heart of Quebec culture where the mere mention of religious trappings (calice, hostie, tabernacle...) makes for good cussing. In a parallel version of this story from New Brunswick, where the old maid hides in a chicken coop to pray. When she lifts her head in prayer, chicken droppings fall into her mouth, to which she exclaims, "Bon Ste. Viarge, j'ai reçu vos grâces, b'en c'est amer!" This response is a remarkable reflection of the downtrodden Acadian culture of the Canadian Maritime provinces. At first glance the following Louisiana French version does not seem to be successful. It depends on the confusion between the owl's hoot and the English "Who?" The storyteller, Mrs. Clotile Richard, had heard the story in English, but had not felt the need to change the cry of the bird to something that would have made sense in French, like the the kildeer's "kee kee," for example, which could be confused with the French "Qui?" For her, it was not at all surprising that God might speak English. Most people in power usually did. Her response is an unconscious reflection of the social context of the storyteller who lives in a bilingual world. The old maid reacted in French to what she mistook for God's "Who?" in the same way that Mrs. Richard herself did when speaking with her own grandchildren who addressed her in English.

La Vieille Fille qui voulait se marier (Clotile Richard; Carencro)

C'était une vieille fille qui voulait se marier. Et puis, elle avait pas d'avantage. Ça fait, elle avait été consulter sa grand-mère. Ça fait, sa grand-mère l'a dit, "Mais, si tu prierais les soirs auprès d'un chêne," elle dit, "ta prière pourrait être exaucée."

Ça fait, la vieille fille est allée prier... prier. Il y avait pas de réponse à sa prière. Ça fait, un soir, elle dit, "Je vas prier avec plus de ferveur!" Elle s'est mis d'à genoux, près du chêne, mis sa tête contre le chêne. "Mon Dieu!" elle crie, "faîtes-moi la grâce que je peux me marier!"

Il y a un vieil hibou qui fait, "Hou houou!"

"Ah," elle dit, "Grand Dieu! Partant que c'est un homme," elle dit, "envoyez-moi le tout de suite!"

Some stories reflect cultural concerns quite directly. The following story, a variant of type 1628 The Educated Son and the Forgotten Language, is known in many areas where a new language threatens the existence of an older one. It was collected in many such parts of the world, including Lithuania, Sweden, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Russia, and Canada. In a version from Ile Maurice in the Indian Ocean, the young man asks in French, "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" pointing to a crab at the marketplace. When the crab pinches him, he regains his native Creole to curse it. In this Louisiana version, a rake handle on the mouth is what it takes to jar the young Cajun's memory.

Jean Sot à l'école (Clotile Richard; Carencro)

Jean Sot avait été à l'école pour apprendre l'anglais. Ça fait, il a revenu back pour visiter son père et sa mère, et il faisait comme s'il comprenait plus le français.

Ça fait, il a été au jardin (son père et sa mère faisaient jardin) pour visiter. Et puis, il voit les rateaux et la pioche. Ça fait, il voulait demander à sa mère ce que c'était cet outil, pour travailler le jardin. Et puis, en même temps, il met son pied sur le rateau. Le rateau a revenu back, l'a frappé sur la bouche. "Ah!" il dit. "Mon fils-de-putain de rateau!"

"Ah," il dit, "mon garçon, je vois ton français commence à te revenir!"

Another important, though often overlooked, category of jokes is the "dirty" joke. These range from the grossly obscene to the mildly naughty. The following story is an example of humor on the farm. Its humor is based on a very earthy understanding of the realities of life and the motivation of sex.

La Truie dans la berouette (Claude Landry; Bayou Pigeon)

T'as entendu cil-là pour le Cadien. Il s'avait marié. Il restait loin, loin, loin dans la campagne. Son premier voisin était deux miles, sûr. Et il avait quelques volailles. Il avait une truie. Il avait un mulet et un cheval. C'était juste lui et sa femme, tu sais? C,a fait, ils ont convenu qu'ils auraient élevé des petits cochons.

Ça fait, sa femme dit, "Mais, Bèbe, t'as pas de verrat."

"Non, mais," il dit, "notre voisin là-bas, lui, il élève des cochons. Lui, il a un verrat là-bas." Il dit, "Je vas emmener la truie là-bas et puis la breed.

Ça fait, sure enough, l'homme, à matin, il a parlé avec son voisin. Son voisin dit ça, "Mais sûr, emmène la truie là-bas dans ton char."

"Mais," il dit, "j'ai pas de char."

"Mais," il dit, "comment est-ce que tu vas l'emmener?"

"Mais," il dit, "tout ce que j'ai, c'est une berouette."

"Mais," il dit, "mets-la dans la berouette et puis emmène-la là-bas dans la berouette."

Ça fait, sure enough, le lendemain matin, il se lève bien de bonne heure. Il met la truie dans la berouette. Elle pesait à peu près deux cents livres, tu sais? Il s'en a été sur le fond du gravel road à peu près deux miles, à pousser cette berouette avec cette truie là-dedans.

Il arrive là-bas. Ils la mettont dans le parc avec le mâle. Le mâle l'a grimpée. Le bougre lui dit ça, "Well, ça devrait être bon." Il rentre back la truie sur la berouette. Back deux miles là-bas chez lui.

Le lendemain matin, il se lève. Il va là-bas au parc regarder. Il vient back dans la maison. Sa femme dit ça, "Quoi il y a, Bèbe?"

*"Got dog!"*il dit, "je connais pas quoi ce qu'il y a, mais on a pas de petits cochons encore."

Elle dit, "Mais peut-être que ça a pas pris."

"Peut-être pas," il dit. "Demain matin, je vas faire la même chose."

Back en haut du chemin.*Breed*la truie encore. Il va. Il regarde dans le parc. Pas de petits cochons encore. Il dit à sa femme, "Moi, je connais pas quoi ça il y a de wrong." Ça fait, il embarque la truie dans la berouette. Pousser back pour les deux miles. Il revient back.

Le lendemain matin, il se lève de bonne heure. Il dit à sa femme, "Bèbe, écoute. Moi, je vas te dire la franche vérité. Moi, je suis fatigué." Il dit, "Comment ça serait que tu irais voir au parc là-bas, voir si on a pas de petits cochons à ce matin."

"Mais," elle dit, "Okay, Bèbe." Ça fait, elle va là-bas. Lui, il était toujours couché dans le lit. Elle revient back.

"Well,"il dit, "Quoi ce que... On a des petits cochons?"

Elle dit, "Non, Bèbe, mais la truie est après t'espérer dans la berouette!"

Tall Tales

The tall tale tradition is very popular in Louisiana. There is a distinction between "une menterie," a lie meant to amuse, and "un mensonge," a lie meant to deceive. When Revon Reed pointed out to a group of visiting French journalists that Cajuns were "artistic liars,"

he was not refering to their mendacity, but to their penchant for le conte fort, the whopper. Just as animal tales are concentrated in the Creole parishes east of Lafayette, tall tales are most popular on the southwestern prairies where the Cajuns' lives where influenced by the American frontier.

Most tall tales are set in a familiar context, often on the farm. Sometimes they are based on a tacit understanding between tellers and audiences to suspend reality for a tale or two. Other times, they are deliberately set up to shock the audience by manipulating familiar reality.

Tall tales are perhaps most interesting when competition develops between several tellers who try to see which of them can most deftly stretch the limits. Indeed there are even stories concerning this sort of competition. This tale, a variant of type 1960D The Great Cabbage, is an excellent example of this structure, sometimes called the Contest in Lying (type 1920A).

La Grosse Pomme de chou et la chaudiere (Stanislaus Faul, dit Tanisse; Cankton)

Une fois, il y avait deux camarades, mais il y en a un, il était menteur, menteur, menteur, mais ça s'adonnait bien. Ça fait, le grand menteur, il a été au Texas, lui. Et il s'avait convenu il aurait été rester au Texas. Ça fait, il dit à l'autre, il dit, "Viens avec moi. Allons rester au Texas. Il y a de la bonne terre là-bas. Il y a moyen de faire des récoltes, ça fait drôle."

"O," l'autre dit, "non, moi, je fais ma vie ici. Moi, je veux pas aller là-bas. Je vas m'ennuyer." Il dit, "Je pourras pas rester."

"O, non!" Il dit, "Tu t'ennuyeras pas." Il dit, "C'est des belles places." Enfin, il dit, "Moi, je suis gone rester."

"Mais," il dit, "va. Si c'est bon, plus tard, je vas peut-être aller."

Ça fait, le bougre a été. Il a déménagé là-bas. Dans l'année d'après, il a revenu faire une promenade par ici. Il a emprunté un cheval pour lui ride. Il a passé en avant de chez l'autre bougre, et son camarade était après rabourer.

Il arrive. Il dit, "Pourquoi t'es aprés graffigner toujours la vieille terre?"

"Ah, bien," il dit, "je suis après faire ma vie."

Il dit, "Tu viens là-bas au Texas, c'est là il y a de la bonne terre."

"Mais," il dit, "comment, quoi c'est vous autres fais?"

Il dit, "Ecoute. Je vas te dire une chose." Il dit, "Il y a un homme, il a fait une pomme de chou." Il dit, "Il a cent têtes de moutons, et les cent moutons vont se coucher à l'ombre en bas de cette grosse pomme de chou."

L'homme lui dit, "Mais, c'est sûr une belle pomme, j'imagine."

Ça fait, le bougre a continué à raconter toutes sortes des affaires, tu connais, comment il avait vu, quoi il avait entendu... Un bout de temps, mais là, c'est que c'était rendu à midi. L'homme voulait s'en aller dîner, lâcher pour aller dîner. Le bougre lui dit, "Moi, depuis je suis gone," il dit, "quoi t'as vu de nouveau?"

"Mais," il dit, "j'ai vu cinquante z-hommes après faire une chaudière." Il faulait..." Dans ce temps-là, tu connais, il faulait ça cogne, ça visse ça. Il dit, "Avec chacun un marteau assez loin à loin qu'un entendait pas l'autre cogner."

"O, mais," il dit, "quoi ils vouliont foutre avec une pareille grosse chaudière?"

"Mais," il dit, "cuire ta pomme de chou!" Ça lui a donné la chance d'aller dîner.

There is also a tradition called le menteur démenti, in which the liar is forced to reduce his story (type 1920D), often with comical results. In this story, the liar finally rebels against his detractor when pushed too far, questioning the very purpose of telling a story if it can't include a little stretching.

Le chasseur de chaoui (Witness Dugas; Lafayette)

Il y avait un bougre qui allait à la chasse. Et il avait tout le temps un nègre avec lui pour approuver ça il tuait. Quand il mentissait, il faulait tout le temps lui haler sur sa queue de capot. Ça fait, il a tiré un chaoui. Et il avait dix pieds de queue. Le nègre hale sur sa queue de capot. Il dit, "Pas aussi long que ça, boss."

Ça fait, il tourne de bord. "Mais," il dit, "peut-être pas dix pieds, mais," il dit, "sûr sept pieds."

Le nègre lui hâle sa queue de capot encore. Il dit, "Peut-être pas sept pieds, mais," il dit, "sûr cinq pieds."

Il le hale encore. "Mais," il dit, "quoi? Tu veux je le laisse avec pas de queue?"

Pascal Stories

There is a special lying tradition in the town of Mamou called Pascal stories. These stories are not performances of "fixed" texts. They are instead spontaneous oral creations, often conversational in nature, which form a system of exaggerations, lies, and nonsense that is quite popular among those who participate in the daily storytelling sessions in the bars along 6th Street in Mamou. Pascal stories are the result of a group effort, with individual parts contributed by members of the group as they alternatively take the floor; each talker helps shape the story by contributing narrative material which applies to the current theme. Occasionally, one especially imaginative person may attain a firm grasp on the floor and may perform alone for several minutes. Invariably, however, someone will eventually challenge him, contribute further to his idea, or even take over the floor with a change of subject if the performance begins to falter. It is the obligation of the talker to spontaneously create his story, to invent an idea appropriate to the Pascal tradition, and then to develop it according to the rules which are defined by the expectations of the other members of group.

In the world of the Pascal story, the main character is often Pascal himself. There are several variant explanations for the origin of the character, although all versions refer to a real-life person as the inspiration for the legendary hero. Some maintain that Pascal is named after a former state trooper, Pascal Guillory, who lived in the Mamou area and was allegedly overzealous in his enforcement of the speed limit. Hence the story about Pascal catching speeding drivers by riding his converted bicycle on telephone or power lines and descending ahead of the speeders.

Pascal et les speeders (Erving Reed; Mamou)

ER: Oh, défunt Pascal, ils l'avaient mis state trooper. Et les chars étaient à course, dans le temps de la guerre. Et ils lui ont donné un bicycle. Il courait aprés les chars. Il pouvait pas les attraper. Ça fait, il a ôté les tires, et il courait dessus les fils de téléphone avec son rim, juste dessus les rims. Et quand il arrivait-là, il sautait en avant-là, il sautait en avant du char. Son bicycle, il était dressé, ouais! Il pouvait parler, "Monsieur Pascal..." Il parlait, ouais, le bicycle!

BA: O?!

ER: Ouais! Il l'appelait "Mister Pascal." Il parlait en anglais.

Pascal's bicycle is an important feature in Pascalian fantasy. Among countless other adventures, he clips along on it at a cool 700 miles per hour and cuts tornadoes in two with a razor blade mounted on the handlebars. In another story, he rides it across the Pacific to Japan so quickly that he is able to answer his own telephone call.

Pascal et son bicycle (Elvin Fontenot, Hube Reed et Alexandre Manuel; Mamou)

EF: Pascal, c'est pas lui qu'avait rentré dans la mer en bicycle?

HR: Il allait vite, mais ouais. Il a été à l'Angleterre, là-bas. Quand Lindbergh a monté l'aéroplane pour aller, il était après espérer Lindbergh là-bas. Lui, il allait, il allait assez vite, c'était... Il allait sur la mer!

BA: Sur son bicycle?

HR: Sur son bicycle. Il a jamais eu un flat. Il cognait trois ou quatre baleines, des petites baleines. Il y en avait une, elle était à peu près un mile de long.

AM: Jim a été à Tokyo, lui.

HR: Jim a été avec Tojo et Tokyo Rose.

AM: Il avait appelé là-bas au téléphone de la Californie et ça a ring deux ou trois fois et il s'a répond.

HR: O, ouais! Faut ça ring trois fois.

AM: Il a descendu de son bicycle et il s'est répondu lui-même, quand il a arrivé au téléphone.

HR: Quand il a appelé là-bas, avant ça peut élever le téléphone, il s'est répond lui-même.

AM: Ouais. Il était rendu de la Californie.

HR: Et là, c'était pas un bébé, mais il avait le vent avec lui, tu connais? Là le courant, toute l'affaire... mais, écoute! Il pagotait, ouais, cher! Ses jambes étaient sûr grosses comme mon cigare, mais il mettait du quatorze dans les souliers.

Pascal, the hero, is most often described as tall and very thin. He is a hero in much the same way that Brer Rabbit is in the trickster tales, champion of the niche (practical joke) and successful rascal.

Pascal is neither an ever-present nor an overbearing element in the stories which bear his namesake. Perhaps his importance is due to his vintage as a character. The next most popular characters in the tradition seem to be Jim Israel and Olide. Pascal's friend and right hand man, Jim Israel is himself often the central character of the stories. His importance is not due to any special descriptive feature, but rather to his innumerable exploits. Jim is constantly involved in some grandiose project such as going to the moon (in any number of outlandish ways) or reflooding and resalting the Pacific Ocean after drying it up to plant rice.

La Mer plantée en riz (Irving et Revon Reed; Mamou)

BA: Ce bougre, Pascal-là, Revon m'a dit qu'il allait à la pêche de baleine.

RR: Ouais, ils avaient été à la pêche une fois. C'était la vieille qu'avait attrapé une baleine, hein? Tu m'avais conté ça une fois. Elle était après pêcher sur la côte de la mer. Elle a attrapé un bite; c'était une baleine. Elle a commencé à caler, mais elle a jamais voulu lâcher la ligne. J'oublie quelle qualité d'appât elle avait, mais je crois c'était des marsouins, je crois, qu'étaient autour de deux ou trois mille livres. Elle avait beaucoup des appâts, mais c'est une

grosse, grosse baleine, tu m'avais conté, elle avait attrapée. Et il y a un bout, ils la halent à terre, mais j'oublie comment ça finit, ça. Tou-tout connaît le conte. Elle et Jim, quand ils avaient été au... et là, quand ils ont planté le Atlantic ... le Pacific Ocean en riz. Tu te rappelles de l'année-là?

IR:	O! Quand ils ont chessé la mer-là?

RR:	Ils ont chessé la mer. Ils l'ont tout plantée en riz en dedans.

IR:	Ils ont chessé la mer et tout ça qui voulait des droits de liés, ça voulait des droits de soybeans. Il y en a qu'a planté des patates. Et les pauvres petites baleines, ça sautait dans la poussière. Quand ils l'ont chessée, il y avait des porpoises et tout ça que tu pouvais demander, et ils l'ont chessée.

BA:	Pourquoi ils avaient chessé l'affaire?

IR:	Mais, ça voulait planter du riz et des soybeans et des affaires. La terre était rendue à court.

BA:	O, ouais.

IR:	Tu connais, il y avait des enfants qu'avaient faim, et il y a pété une avalasse. Il a mouillé trente-neuf jours. Ça mouillé dix pouces d'épais tous les demie-heure. Ça a tout rempli la mer.

BA:	Mais, ils ont perdu toute leur récolte?

IR:	C'est Jim qu'avait percé le fils-de-putain de gros nué. Il l'avait percé avec une aiguille, mais pas une petite aiguille, non. Une de ces grosses spikes de chemin-de-fer-là. Et il est venu là, "Tiaupe!"

RR:	Et ils ont pas manqué leur récolte à cause de ça?

IR:	Mais tout l'affaire était perdue!

RR:	Except le riz, je pense.

IR: Le riz est venu, il avait dix-neuf pieds de long.

BA: Le riz?

IR: Et il arrivait, juste il pouvait faire une petite grappe en haut, pauvre petite bête. Et ça passait en bateau, ça coupait leurs petites grappes-là, pour eux-autres manger pour pas ça crève de faim. Les fraises, elles avaient resté au fond là-bas-là. Défunt Mayo, il plongeait, puis il les cassait, puis il les lâchait-là, "Ploupe!" Ça sortait-là, ça flottait en haut.

RR: Et Jim les ramassait.

IR: Et Pascal était fourré dans l'affaire. C'est Pascal qu'a tout fait l'affaire. Boy, c'est un fils-de-putain, ouais, ce Pascal.

BA: Quoi c'est qu'il a fait?

IR: Mais c'est lui, c'est lui qu'a tout fait l'affaire. C'est lui qu'a fait Jim... Ça il disait à Jim-là, Jim l'écoutait.

RR: C'est lui qu'a cassé le nué?

IR: Il a fait Jim aller casser les nués. Jim a tout percé ces gros nués-là. En dernier, il avait une grosse cross-tie. Il les perçait-là, "Ouah!" Et la mer était sec, mais il l'a remplie dans, dans... O, avant trente jours, mais ces chères grosses baleines et les porpoises et toute qualité de poissons, ça battait. Et ils ont gonflé dessus l'eau, et puis ça faisait signe avec leur queues comme ça. [geste indiquant un salut]

BA: Ils disaient merci?

IR: Ils disaient merci.

BA: Mais, c'était pas l'eau fraîche qu'a tombé en dedans-là?

IR: Ouais. Non, non, mais là, Jim est venu avec son emballeuse et

il a salé la mer. Tu te rappelles de ça, Revon?

RR: Quand il avait salé la mer, ouais.

IR: Quand la grosse pluie a pris, les poissons d'eau salée pouvaient pas vivre dans l'eau douce. Pascal a percé les nués. Et Jim est venu-là avec des tonnes de sel. Il est venu droit là à Avery's Island après le sel.

BA: O, ouais!

RR: C'est là oû il dit, "Comment t'aimes la mer?" Et l'autre a goûté, "Mais," il dit, "elle est juste bonne, juste assez de salée."

Pascal's neighbor, Olide, shared in many of the early exploits of the tradition and was apparently more popular years ago than presently. He is the brother of Tante Auroc and the boyfriend of the infamous Tante Coque. In spite of a heart transplant to his back (to avoid mal au coeur), he died unexpectedly at the tender age of 123 on the day of birth, 32 February. Tante Coque is generally referred to as a wicked old witch. According to some reports, she is indeed well placed in the hierarchy of witches. In all reports, she hates Pascal fiercely and is obsessed with his undoing. Another in the system of characters is Mayo Israel, Jim's brother, often cast as the goat or the fool, offering a foil for Jim and Pascal. For example, in a tale describing the division of the moon, Mayo was initially duped into taking the dark side, although he unwittingly profited from the dark, rich soil in the long run. In the following story, his role as provider of water on the moon parallels that of the Biblical Moses, and his job of putting out the sun each night sounds like something out of Greek mythology.

Mayo sur la lune (Irving et Revon Reed; Mamou)

IR: Il y avait pas d'eau là-bas sur la lune, quand ils ont arrivé, mais Mayo a fait de l'eau! Mayo travaillait pour l'affaire d'eau.

RR: Il travaillait pour Mamou Waterworks. Il a trouvé de l'eau sur la lune?

IR: Mayo va prendre une qualité de pierre il y a dessus la lune et il reste peut-être cinq gallons d'eau. Ça connaît pas comment longtemps, mais il boit peut-être deux gorgées par jour. Et il va cracher sur une de ces pierres-là, ça fait une rivière, une rivière que l'eau coule partout, il paraît. Il a fait un gros pond l'autre jour, le dernier gros crachat il a fait-là, quand il a fait la rivière. Ça tombe là-dedans. C'est tout de l'eau fraîche. Et à tout moment, il éteint le soleil là-dedans. Il l'éteint le soir. C'est pour ça tu le vois pas.

Rounding out the cast of regular characters are Pascal's three ounce dog, who is as fast as his owner and a great hunter despite his tiny size; the diable, who is the unhappy husband of the diablesse Tante Coque; and Bouki, a relatively new character probably based on the Bouki and Lapin animal tales. There are indeed a host of other characters involved in the Pascal system and new ones are likely being created even now. However, the above-mentioned are the most prominent and well-defined characters, assured of relative permanence. In addition to these fictional characters, real-life persons are often cast in the Pascal stories. Those fictionalized are usually prominent talkers, as in the case of Hube Reed, who tells of his desire to have a sea turtle's heart transplanted on his right side, so that when his own heart failed, he would simply switch over to the transplant and live another few hundred years. (Compare type 660 The Fabulous Transplants.)

L'Operation à Hube (Hube Reed et Alexandre Manuel; Mamou)

HR: Quand je vas mourir (j'ai fait mon will l'autre jour), je veux ça prend rien que ma tête. Et les côtes, que ça donne ça aux chiens. Je vas aller chez Simon-là, je veux il me donne une de ces petites boîtes à souliers-là. Je vas mettre ma coyoche en dedans-là, rien qu'avec assez pour une petite cravate. Fermer les n-oeils. Si il met des four bits, Alex, prends-les pas, non! Quitte-moi monter avec mes taxes en haut-là.

AM: Je te garantie, si je suis cassé, je vas les prendre les deux.

HR: C'est comme ça je veux aller. Et je parie Shorty croit pas ça, non. Tu me crois ou tu me crois pas?

S: Je te crois pas.

HR: C'est dur à croire qu'il me croit pas. Mais je vas me faire opérer la semaine qui vient. Je vas me mettre une cervelle d'éléphant. Là, tu oublies jamais. J'auras pas besoin de mon petit livre pour écrire ces notes-là.

AM: Un éléphant?!

HR: Tu vois, hier, je voulais dire quelqu'un pour il vient souper. J'ai oublié. Et là, je veux me faire mettre un coeur de caouane bord-là. [geste désignant le côté droit> Tu connais ces caouanes de

mer-là, ça vit trois cents années, ça. Ça fait, quand ce maudit va arrêter de battre comme ça-là, j'aurais un petit bouton-là, "Proupe!" Et ce coeur de caouane va commencer, ces caouanes de mer-là qu'a des ailes, manière. Là, veux pas me raser. Comment tu crois, j'aurais un bébé de barbe, trois cents années.

As certain characters have attained well-defined roles within the system, certain settings are also well established. Perhaps the most popular setting for Pascal tales is the moon, or the way there. One of the earliest accounts told of Pascal and Olide's attempt to get to the moon, long before the American astronauts, of course.

Voyage à la lune (Revon Reed; Mamou)

RR: L'autre qu'on contait pour le même Pascal et Olide, quand ils allaient à la lune, longtemps avant qu'on parlait des astronauts puis tout ça. Ça voulait aller à la lune; à tout moment, ça parlait de ça. La vieille tante avait quelques sous. Ils ont emprunté je crois cinq, vingt piastres. Puis ils ont fait une de ces capsules-là pour aller à la lune. Et tout a été bien. Je crois ils avaient deux ou trois vieilles machines à coudre et ils ont mis ça...

BA: Des machines à coudre?

RR: Ouais, des machines à coudre. Et là, Pascal avait attrapé des éclairs, tu vois? Il a passé tout l'hiver; il guettait les ouragans et puis quand les éclairs frappaient, il les mettait dans un sac. Ça, c'était leur énergie, leur power take-off, les éclairs. Et ils ont tout

mis ça ensemble d'une manière assez pour les deux monter, puis ils ont parti. Et tout allait bien. Et les chances sont, ils auraient été les premiers pour arriver à la lune, except ils estiont près à arriver quand tout d'un coup, la lune s'est couchée. Ça pouvait pas la trouver. Ils avaient oublié amener un flashlight.

The moon has come to symbolize, in the Pascal stories, a land of pure fantasy, "up there," where anything can happen. It provides the loosely defined setting, removed from familiar reality, safe from scrutiny, and appropriate for even the wildest adventures. Originally populated by little green men with one eye in the middle of their foreheads, the moon is now the domicile of the departed heroes of the legendary past: Olide, Bouki, Pascal, and Mayo. The moon is thus similar to the Greek concept of Hades or the Norse concept of Valhalla where heroes are maintained in a semiphysical sense. Though Pascal and friends may come back to Earth for occasional adventures, they have escaped the mundane existence of this world. Their absence is expressly regretted by the tellers who frequently allude to their aspirations to go "up there" one day, as much to get away from their wives as to join all of their heroes.

Other fantasy lands employed in the Pascal tradition are Hell (a barbeque of people) and Africa (popular for its obvious exotic potential). Both of these settings fulfill the same thematic need as does the moon. The essential requirement for the setting of a Pascal tale is that it be "somewhere else," far from examination. Finally, the Mamou area itself is obviously a useful setting for some aspects of the tales, usually as a point of departure or return. The tradition makes use of familiar surroundings for the purposes of pseudorealism, intensifying the lies by toying with the deliberate misuse of facts and by disarming the listener with vague familiarities and references to the real world.

In its most usual form, the method of producing the Pascal story is in conversational exchange between at least two active performers who, ideally, challenge one another to adopt new directions as the session develops. Ideal production involves performing with another talker, vying with him for the floor, but taking care to avoid shutting him off completely, as in the following story which eventually describes the literal partition (by cutting them up with a saw) and moving (with a winch) of the Philippines.

Le Partage des Philippines (Hube Reed and Alexandre Manuel; Mamou)

HR: Il a un winch-là que...il peut haler Mamou ici, s'il trouverait bien, parce qu'il a un bon dead man. Rien que le cable est deux pieds. Non, à peu près gros comme ça, hein Alex? A peu près un pied et demi, son cable en acier...

AM: Il est terrible. tout je veux te dire, il y avait un village qu'il aimait pas et il a pris sa balloon et son...

HR: Il l'a accroché et puis il l'a halé à peu près vingt miles à c'té là-bas.

AM: Il était... Non, il était là-bas dans la Chine. Il était à collé le petit village dans la Chine.

BA: Avec tout le monde?

AM: Mais il a fendu l'affaire?

HR: Le soir, il l'a mis dessus un rack.

AM: C'est ça qu'a fait une partie du Pacific, tu comprends?

HR: Ouais.

AM: Le Pacific.

HR: Je crois c'est à Guam ou dans les Philippine Islands, Manila. Pas Manila?

AM: Ouais, Manila. J'étais là. J'ai vu ayoû c'est qu'il l'a fait.

HR: Alexandre était là. Il était docteur.

AM: Et la boucane brûle toujours.

HR: Ils se sont jamais aperçu. Il a mis son cable tout le tour de son petit village, et puis il a accroché son...

AM: C,a l'aimait pas. Ça voulait pas il se pose là. Quand il se posait, ça faisait une explosion.

HR: Mais!

BA: Comment il a fait pour le couper en deux?

AM: Mais avec le passe-partout à Bouki!

HR: Bouki avait un passe-partout, les dents étaient à peu près deux pieds, hein? Le passe-partout était à peu près cinquante pieds de long, des deux manches.

AM: Il l'a scié par petits bouts. Il l'a pas fini tout d'un coup. Il l'a scié...

HR: Ouais. Je me rappelle bien de ça. J'avais trois mois.

Unlike the performance of rapid exchanges between two or more talkers, another method of production can consist primarily of monologue, when there are no other active talkers in the audience. This is the case in Erving Reed's account of Jim Israel's accidental voyage to the moon in a runaway haybaler. The storyteller's brother Revon Reed, the only other potentially active talker present, deliberately restrained himself from interrupting Erving's speech until near the end. This unusual restraint was exercised with the specific intent of isolating Erving as storyteller. Although this solo performance demonstrates that Pascal tellers can maintain enough "steam" to spin off a whole story alone, it is important to note that Erving declared himself tired as the story neared its end.

L'Emballeuse à Jim (Irving et Revon Reed; Mamou)

IR: Tu connais ces vieilles emballeuses à foin-là? C'était emmené avec un cheval. Et pauvre défunt Jim... Il est mort, mais il est sur la lune asteur. Raleigh est mort. C'était une grosse mule, ça l'appelait Raleigh. Pauvre vieille Raleigh est morte et Jim a pris à jongler qui il aurait fait avec cette emballeuse-là. Ça fait, il l'a convert avec un vieux petit gas motor...

RR: Je croyais c'était une laveuse.

IR: ...fait avec une de ces lawn-mowers-là, manière. Il l'a crank, la fouleuse a parti. Tu connais, ça qui foulait la balle? Elle a parti, elle a parti, elle a parti. Pauvre vieille cousine... Comment elle s'appelait? La maman à Mémé-là? Tante Nat! Tante Nat était après guetter dans la fenêtre. Tante Nat, elle guettait."Good-bye! Good-bye!"

elle dit à Jim. "Reviens!" Et Jim pouvait plus haler le clutch, et le clutch était accroché. Il a été-là dessus la lune.

BA: O!

ER: Il a été. Il s'est posé là. Il a fait son duty là. Il a rejoint deux ou trois petits bougres verts. Ils avaient la peau verte. Ça parlait français.

BA/RR: O, ouais!

ER: Ça parlait quatorze langages! Il dit, "Tu peux me donner le chemin back to Mamou?

"Hmmm," ça dit, "on a été à peu près vingt fois à Mamou. Tout ça on voit, c'est des saloons. Il y a une église. Il y a un et deux qui va à la messe." Il dit, "Nous autres, on est tous des Catholiques ici." Là, il a pété un petit coup de sifflet-là. Il en a vu à peu près cinq cents de ces petits diables verts-là qu'a sorti. Ils se sont tous mis accroupis à Jim. Ils disent, "Ça, c'est Saint Jim."

Et l'emballeuse courait toujours. Il dit, "Ecoute! Je vas manquer de gaz. Il faudra je me hâte m'en rentourner. Et sure enough, il a manqué de gaz. Et il s'est éteint.

"Mais," il dit, "comment je vas faire?" Mais sur la lune, ils ont un tas de gaz dessus leur estomac. Ça rôte un tas. Et il a pris à les faire rôter dans le tank de gaz. Et rôte que je te rôte! Tout à l'heure, l'aiguille a montré full. Il a halé la petite corde-là. "Craque!" Ça a reparti-là, "Titicourabungdabungdabungda!" Il est venu là, et il est tombé droit là, au ras de chez les LaHaye là-bas. C'est Aubry LaHaye qui a été à son secours.

In this performance, the most challenging remark from the audience was Revon's cynical "O ouais!" in reaction to Erving's description of the little green men on the moon as francophonic. The storyteller showed a flash of his potential strength in dismissing the cynicism with his one-line "Ça parlait quatorze langues!" stressing his freedom as creator. Without further challenge from his audience, he resumed the monologue in a matter-of-fact tone.

The development of this monologue is quite typical of the Pascal tradition. The voyage is to a fantasy land: the moon, inhabited by little green men; in a familiar vehicle which has acquired fantastic powers: the hay baler as rocket ship. Jim finds himself stranded on the moon with a very commn problem: his motor is out of gas. The dénouement of the story is the moonmen belching into the empty gas tank in order to make possible Jim's return to Mamou. After the account of Jim's homecoming meal of ten bales of alfalfa hay, Erving's monologue fades into a dialogue with Revon. As the tape recorder was being turned off at Erving's request, Revon declared, "That's a new one for me!" and Erving retorted, "Me, too!" In true Pascal fashion, he created the idea on the spur of the moment and developed it as he went along.

Legendary Stories

Lengendary stories appear frequently in the Louisiana French repertoire. The most popular of these describe buried treasure and the unusual or supernatural phenomena which accompany attempts to unearth it. There is in fact quite a bit of treasure buried in Louisiana.

During the Civil War, certain people buried their valuables to protect them from Yankee raiders and vigilantes alike. A traditional mistrust of banks among the settlers of French origin caused some of them to hide their valuables. Sometimes these wary folks died without telling anyone in the family where their fortunes were buried and it remained for others to find. The activities of pirates or corsairs like Jean Lafitte also contributed to the store of buried treasure stories in Louisiana.

Buried treasure stories, known the world over, often include references to ghosts and other spirits. One explanation holds that these spirits are the souls of people who were somehow implicated in the burying of the treasure and seek to preserve it for family members. Another describes the pirates' tradition of killing one of their number or an animal and burying him or it with the treasure to protect it from interlopers. This malevolent spirit usually provides the intrigue for these stories. In the following story, a fire-breathing bull runs off a band of treasure hunters until a spirit _controler_ is located.

Le Controleur d'esprits et le boeuf (Samuel Gauthreaux; Cecilia)

A Charenton, dans le nord du lac Charenton, il y avait ce vieux Indien qui s'appelait Jim. Et ils ont demandé à vieux Jim ayoû un certain chêne avec une marque au nord du lac. Et vieux Jim a dit il connaissait.

Ça fait, ils ont été. Ils ont commencé à fouiller. Et dès qu'ils ont fouillé un bout, il y avait un gros boeuf qui s'en venait en

travers de le bois avec la flamme qui lui sortait du nez.

Ça fait, ça a passé. et ça a juste touché la pelle de le bougre qu'était après fouiller, et tout la bande a échappé. Ça fait, dès que le bougre a regardé, tous les autres étaient gone. Ça fait, il a gone aussi.

Et le bougre dit à l'Indien, "Well," il dit, "faudra je retourne en ville après un contrôleur d'esprits." Ça fait, il dit, "Je vas revenir back."

Ça fait, quelque temps après, il a revenu back, mais c'était dans le temps qu'il y avait ces vigilants-là, tu connais, les Ku Klux Klan. Et sa femme croyait que c'était ça le monde qui voulait causer avec lui. Ça fait, sa femme a pas voulu il va avec eux. Ça fait, le contrôleur d'esprits-là, il dit à l'Indien, "Est-ce que tu nous livres ta part?"

Et l'Indien dit, "Ouais, go ahead, vous autres peux l'avoir."

Ça fait, ils ont été. Ça fait, quelque temps après, l'Indien dit à pauvre Pap... Il était après passer dans le bois pas loin de là. Ça fait, il a décidé il aurait été dans le nord du lac pour voir, tu connais. Le trou était là, et la caisse, et les marques de piastres étaient dessus les bois qu'ils ont cassé de la caisse. Ça fait, ils l'ont trouvé. Le contrôleur d'esprits l'avait fait. Faut croire il a contrôlé le boeuf-là, le boeuf avec la flamme. Mais ça dit la flamme sortait dans le nez et ça pouvait l'entendre s'en venir dans le bois. Ça entendait le bois craquer, tu connais, dès qu'il sautait. Plus ça craquait fort, plus près il venait, jusqu'à il arrivait côté d'eux.

Most treasure hunting legends are harrowing adventure stories filled with ghosts and evil spirits. Some of them, however, can be almost humorous misadventures, like the following story about the spirit controller who abandoned a treasure site along with the rest of the crew when the spirits did not respond to his efforts.

Le Contrôleur et sa bible (Leonard Gauthreaux; Cecilia)

J'ai été rencontrer un vieux homme à Marrero, et il m'a conté une histoire. Il a été chercher pour un trésor avec d'autres hommes. Et il y avait un contr'leur qu'avait amené une bible pour contrôler les spirits. Et quand ils arraivaient à la place, ils ont vu un gros cheval s'en venir à travers du bois avec un homme dessus, et quand il a descendu, c'était plus un homme qu'était sur le cheval. C'était un chien. Et il dit le chien a venu se frotter sur ses jambes. Il dit il grognait. Il dit le chien, il connait le chien était après le toucher, mais il sentait pas à rien. C'est comme si c'était juste du vent. Et il dit ils se sont tous sauvés. Il a perdu son chapeau et ses lunettes et il a tout déchiré son linge. Et jusqu'à le contr'leur s'est sauvé et il a jamais vu sa bible après ça.

Not all Louisiana legends have to do with buried treasure. Some stories are actually localized versions of internationally known legends, such as the following tale, a variant of type 752B The Forgotten Wind, about the man who wanted to control the weather, but failed.

L'Homme qui demandait la pluie (Stanislaus Faul, dit Tanisse; Cankton)

Il y avait un homme, et il aurait toujours voulu avoir et que les autres aient pas. C'était une homme, tu connais, qui était glorieux, il voulait se faire accroire mieux que les autres.

Il était après travailler son maïs. Le Bon Dieu passe, Il dit, "T'as du joli maïs

"Ouais, mais," il dit, "*boy*, s'il pourrait avoir la pluie comme je voudrais, là je ferais du maïs."

Bon Dieu dit, "Mais quand t'aurais besoin de la pluie?"

"Ah, mais," il dit, "à soir, une bonne pluie, et une pluie tous les temps en temps..."

"Mais," Il dit, "'garde, t'auras de la pluie à soir et à chaque fois que t'auras besoin de la pluie," Il dit, "juste dis tu veux de la pluie tel temps, et tu l'auras."

"O, mais," il dit, "là, je vas faire du maïs, si je pourrais croire ça."

Il dit, "Tu l'auras. *Go ahead*."

Ça fait, le Bon Dieu a parti. Le soir, il y a venu une bonne pluie, juste comme à peu près qu'il voulait. Droit à la barrière qui séparait l'autre clos, c'était du monde pauvre qui restait là, faire du petit maïs. Il y a pas eu de la pluie du tout.

Quelques jours après, il dit, "Là, une bonne pluie encore," il dit, "là, mon maïs viendrait." La pluie a venu, comme il voulait. Les autres, pas de pluie. Sec, leur petit maïs était jaune.

Boy, il était content. Il dit "Moi, je vas faire du maïs; les autres en fera pas."

Les autres quand ça a venu temps, le Bon Dieu a voulu, Il a donné une pluie à eux-autres, ça a fait des épis de maïs. Mais son maïs à lui a juste fait des champignons. Une petite affaire blanche à la place des épis de maïs. Il a fait pas une graine de maïs.

Ironically, the best known Louisiana French legends are also the least told. Legendary figures like the _loup garou_, _feux follets_, and _chasse galerie_ are known by many. Consequently a simple reference is usually all that is needed to conjure the legend. If someone is late for a meeting, one may say, "Well, maybe he's following a _feu follet_. Unless someone present does not understand the reference, the legend functions without a telling. If however, a stranger, a young person, or a folklorist requests an explanation, a story like the following one about the _chasse galerie_ may be told. The Louisiana variant of this legend resembles the French version concerning the hunter who is condemned for hunting on Sunday, rather than the Québécois version concerning the lumberjacks who sell their souls to the devil in exchange for the ability to row their canoe through the air. Both versions are often used to explain the sound of thunder.

La Chasse-galerie (Stanislaus Faul, dit Tanisse; Cankton)

La chasse-galerie, c'est un homme qui avait été à la messe dimanche matin, tu connais. Et l'église était dans la prairie. Et il y a

quelqu'un avec des chiens qui les avait suit. La messe était juste bien commencée, les chiens ont sorti au ras de la porte ayoû il était assis avec un lapin, à courser un lapin. Il a sorti dehors et il a parti à la course derrière lui aussi et il est après galoper toujours.

C'est ça ils ont appelé la chasse-galerie. Pendant des années, il a galopé sur la terre, mais asteur, il peut plus. Ça va dans l'air, ça. Mon père et mon beau-frère ont resté un soir un arpent avant de rentrer dans la savane à l'écouter passer. "Hou, hou, hou," ils écoutaient, comme si c'était des cloches et des chaînes. Supposé, il passe dans chaque pays tous les sept ans.

Experience Stories

Often ignored for their lack of traditional pedigree, personal experience stories deserve a place in a description of Louisiana French oral tradition. Unlike historians and folklorists, storytellers must entertain their audiences if they are to keep the floor. An original incident is related, expanded, polished, and embellished to eventually become a full-blown story, with a beginning, an initial development, a climax, a dénouement, and an ending. There are characters and roles. Historical truth becomes less important than psychological truth in the mind of the tellers and their audiences. Facts are molded, if necessary, to fit the shape of the developing story. These accounts are often masterpieces of oral tradition, frequently requested by an eager audience of family members and friends who delight in hearing them told and retold. Often, storytellers feel it necessary to remind listeners that "This is no tale. This is true." Yet, their stories become tales in form and function, if not in origin. The following is a moving account of the horrors of racism and of the vigilantes who enforced it after the Civil War. Notice that what begins as a description in conversation becomes a story when the teller illustrates her general description with a specific case.

La Vigilance (Inez Catalon; Kaplan)

BA: Tu te rappelles la dernière fois que je suis venu ici, t'avais raconté des histoires de mardi-gras et ces hommes qui couraient à

cheval, qui terrorisaient les...

IC: O, ça. C'était les... Comment t'appelles ça? La vigilance!

BA: La vigilance, ouais.

IC: La vigilance.

BA: Raconte-moi un petit brin de ça. Je me rappelle pas.

IC: O, mais cher, il y en avait amené un tas ici pour le temps de la vigilance. Un monde de couleur pouvait pas faire comme il voulait, tu connais. Comme il faulait il soit chez lui avant le soleil couché, et s'il était pas chez lui avant le soleil couché, et bien, ils le bûchiont. Ils le tailliont, ça appelait ça.

Mam m'a dit un soir, il y avait un homme. Il jouait de l'accordéon. Et ils ont rentré en dans là, le bal. Ils ont cassé le bal, mais pas tout le monde est parti, mais il y a quelqu'un qu'a rentré. Ils l'ont pris, puis ils l'ont ramené dans le bois-là. Ils l'ont bûché, cet homme-là, qu'il était tout marqué. Mam dit il est revenu. Il s'a assis. Il a joué de l'accordéon comme jamais il avait joué! Il a été, il s'a couché de ça-là, de cette bûcherie ils l'aviont fait-là. Et ils l'ont bûché juste parce qu'il jouait de l'accordéon. Comme Clifton Chenier et puis ceux-là-là, tu connais. Et ça voulait que ça travaille pour une vie. Mais ceux qu'auraient fait bal de maison, ça engageait ce monde pour jouer bal. Là, eux, ça travaillait dans le clos. Ça faisait leur petite récolte et c'était tout. Là, si ça avait pas idée de travailler comme le samedi soir, mais là, ça travaillait pas samedi. Ça allait jouer leur bal. mais il y avait du monde qui était contre ça. C'était trop aisé pour lui, pour eux, tu connais.

Ça fait, ça l'a taillé. Là, ça l'a bûché assez, d'après moi, ça lui a peut-être mâché dedans le corps, moi, je sais pas. Mais il a rentré, il a joué, ils ont dit, Mam m'a dit, comme jamais, jamais il avait joué avant. De là-là.

BA: Tu te rappelles pas de son nom?

IC: Hmmm... Je me rappelle pas de son nom. Il y a si longtemps de ça. Il a été, il s'a couché de là-là, il s'a couché. Cet homme était tout raide, raide, raide, raide, raide! Et il a resté comme ça, je sais pas comment longtemps, mais il a mouru des coups.

Et tu connais quoi c'est qu'a cassé cette affaire-là? Tu parles du monde civilisé! Il y a homme qu'avait un petit moulin à gru dans la campagne, tu connais. Ça moudait le maï"s pour la farine et le gru. Ça fait, le vieux-t-homme a mouru, mais le seul qui pouvait courir le petit moulin à gru, c'était cet homme de couleur qu'avait toujours resté sur la place. Ça fait, quand le mari a mouru, la vieille femme dit à l'homme, "Mais, tu vas prendre le moulin en charge, parce que moi, je peux pas." Mais ils étaient du monde, tu connais, du monde riche. Ça fait, l'homme dit il avait manière peur de prendre ça. Elle dit, "Faut pas t'aies peur. Prends-le!"

Ça fait, il a été un jour, il dit, "Well," il dit, "je vas arrêter." Il dit, "Je arrête parce que, il y a un homme..." Il a nommé l'homme, mais moi, j'ai oublié ces noms-là. Et il dit, "Il a venu. Il s'a assis-là. Il m'a fait tout prendre les blancs avant et," il dit, "faulait les noirs restent en arrière."

"Mais," elle dit, "tu vas retourner demain. Premier arrivé, premier servi." Et il a fait ça. Et là, elle lui a donné des fusils, deux fusils. Elle dit, "Si t'es jamais gêné, défends-toi!"

Et là, il a été, le soir, il s'a couché, mais il avait des poulets dans une baille. Et puis, ils ont mis les poulets à la porte, mais c'était pas barré. Il y avait des clous et des cordes, tu connais, pour arranger les portes, et tout moitié arrangées. Ça fait, tout ça le monde avait pour faire, si ça voulait rentrer, c'était hâler sur la porte. Et ils ont tombé dans la baille de poulets, puis là, la poule a fait du train, et les poulets. Ça fait, la femme l'a réveillé. Elle dit, "Ils sont là!"

Ça fait, il avait le fusil près de son lit. Il a attrapé le fusil, puis il a tiré à la porte. Et cil-là qu'était à la porte, il l'a tué. Ça fait, ils l'ont prêché, ils l'ont prêché pour la paix, pour laisser prendre cil-là qu'était mort, et ils l'auriont laissé tranquille, ils auriont plus retourné. Ça fait, lui, il a arrêté de tirer.

O mais, ils étaient à peu près une cinquantaine, ou une centaine, quand ça allait. C'était une bande! A cheval!

Sometimes these experience stories develop a humorous event. The following story concerns the common practice on the Louisiana frontier of ruffians taking over a dance hall for their own amusement on Saturday nights. This same story, told invariably "for cash," is said to have happened in a multitude of dance halls throughout South Louisiana.

Victor et Arthur essaient de casser le bal (Adley Gaudet; Bayou Pigeon)

Vieux Victor Vaughn était un batailleur, tu sais, c'était un bon batailleur. Il était connu, vieux Victor Vaughn. Et un des cousins à Pap, vieux Arthur Gaudet. Ils ont été pour casser un bal un soir. Le cousin à Pap dit à vieux Victor, "Vic, allons casser le bal à soir."

Il dit, "All right!"*

Il y avait un jeune homme et il était petit. Il avait juste à peu près cinq pieds, vieux Jake Mayeux. Et ça, c'est correct, ouais! C'est un joke dans une manière, mais c'est vrai.

Il dit, "Vic, moi, je vas rentrer en dedans-là, et toi, mets-toi à la fenêtre en dehors et comptes-les." Il dit, "Moi, je vas les passer en dehors."

Ça fait, vieux Jake s'en vient en dansant. God damn! Il l'attrape par le col et par la ceinture. "Boy," il dit, "c'est pas rien pour passer vieux Jake en travers." Jake pesait à peu près quatre-vingt-dix livres, tu sais. Il le passe en travers la fenêtre. Il tombe en dehors.

Vic dit, "Un!"

Boy, il y a quatre ou cinq qui lui ont tombé dessus l'autre. Lui, il était grand, Arthur Gaudet. Ils l'ont sacré à travers de la fenêtre. Il tombe dehors.

Vic dit, "Deux!"

"Euh, euh... Vic!" Il dit, "Compte pas ça icitte, c'est moi!"

Stories about contraband runners abound in Louisiana, especially those about the ones who got away from the federal agents. Many of these are based on the same principal as the animal tales, with the wily moonshiner pitted against the government agents which usually fall into the role of the dupes. There is also some of the outlaw hero factor here. Most listeners sympathize with the moonshiner who succeeds in deflecting the larger forces of the government. The following tale tells of a narrow excape, _à la_ Robin Hood.

Les Revenues (Andrew Chautin; Gillis)

Un jour, j'arrivais au camp, et je m'étais aperçu qu'il y avait quelque chose qui était _wrong_. J'ai vu des pistes dans la boue que j'étais pas accoutumé de voir. Ça fait, j'étais à cheval et il y avait pas de selle, pas rien sur le cheval. J'avais justement mis la bride en haut et puis j'avais amarré après la barrière du camp. Et les _revenue men_ étaient cachés depuis l'avant-jour pour m'espérer.

Ça fait, j'ai arrivé là. J'ai descendu. J'ai amarré le cheval avec la corde après la barrière. Quand j'ai descendu, il y a deux des _revenues_ qui ont galopé en allant à moi avec deux pistolets qui ressemblaient longues comme ça. [geste pour indiquer environ un mètre]

J'ai sauté sur ce cheval. Et c'est un cheval qui était nerveux puis vite. Et le cheval s'a aperçu qu'il y avait quelque chose qui était _wrong_. Quand j'ai monté en haut de lui, j'ai pas eu le temps pour démarrer la corde après la bride. Et les _revenues_ ont pris à galoper en allant à moi et ils m'auraient attrapé. Quand j'ai vu ça, j'ai jonglé le plus court je peux faire, c'est ôter la bride du cheval et rester en haut. Ça fait, j'ai poussé la bride et j'ai ôté ça de dans sa tête. Le

cheval a tourné et puis ça a parti. Il passait en travers des éronces et il sautait avec moi monté sur son dos. Il avait la queue de collée en arrière de mon épaule après se sauver.

Et ils nous ont pas attrapés. Hé, j'avais peur, donc.

Conclusions

I have not treated the stories told by the Cajuns and Creoles in English here. These are addressed in another part of my report. (See "The Cajun Who Went to Harvard: Identity in the Louisiana French Oral Tradition.") The stories told in French represent that part of Cajun and Creole oral tradition which comes from the inside. The present strain on the language places a considerable strain on the tradition. Many of the stories which can be translated are now being told in English. As a rule, storytellers don't make value judgements concerning cultural and linguistic preservation. More important to them is the appropriate reaction of their audiences. They will instinctively tell their stories in the language which gives their punch lines the most chance of making people laugh. Yet, a vast amount of the repertoire continues to be told in French for a variety of reasons. First, many of the best storytellers feel more confident in French. Their timing and vocabulary is stronger in their native language. Further, the French languages sometimes functions as a convenient secret code with which one can selectively isolate one's audience. Thus adults can eliminate children and insiders can eliminate outsiders from their potential audiences. Finally, the French language is an important identity marker with which one can underscore one's origins and cultural allegiances. Thus many storytellers, especially politicians and businessmen, elect to tell their stories in French as an overt expression of their Cajun or Creole ethnicity.

Outside the realm of language itself, the Louisiana French repertoire seems to be also heavily influenced by the American context in which the Cajuns and Creoles have lived for over 350 years. The connections between Louisiana and France and Louisiana and Africa are undeniably important, especially in the oldest genres, but the socio-geographic and cultural connections between Louisiana and America is also very important, especially in the most contemporary genres. Louisiana is not only part of the French-speaking and Creole-speaking worlds. It is also a part of the American South, of the Gulf Coast, of the Caribbean Basin, of the Mississippi Valley, of the American West, of the political United States, and of North America. It has features in common with other sub-tropical areas and with other bilingual/bicultural areas. Thus the joke which tickles while touching sensitive spots can reveal as much truth about the culture as the most ancient fables and magic tales. Legendary stories and experience stories are both very regional, attached to the place which gave them birth, and international, expressing local versions of universal problems and preoccupations among people everywhere who tell stories to help make sense of their lives.

LANGUAGE: Sources

Barry Jean Ancelet

There are hundreds of hours of recorded interviews in the Archive of Cajun and Creole Folklore in the University of Southwestern Louisiana. These interviews were recorded throughout French Louisiana and thus provide a wide range of dialects and accents from most of the major linguistic areas of region. This collection includes field recordings from storytelling and oral history projects by Barry Jean Ancelet (1970s-80s) and by Glen Pitre (1970s-80s). Also at the university are the collections of Ralph Rinzler (1960s) and Alan Lomax (1930s). Consisting primarily of musical performances, these collections also include oral histories. There is also a major collection of interviews recorded primarily on the eastern side of the Atchafalaya Basin at the Terrebonne Parish library, also by Glen Pitre (1980s). Between these three sources, all major sub-regional dialects of Louisiana French are available. Excerpts from these collections would give visitors an idea of the nature and variety of Louisiana French.

Some of the major areas, along with representative recordings, include:

New Orleans (urban Creole French); Lomax collection
St. Bernard Parish (black river Creole French); Barthelemy: Rinzler collection
Vacherie (river parish Acadian French); Labat: Ancelet collection

Terrebonne Parish (eastern coastal Acadian French); Pitre collection

(Houmas Indians French); Pitre collection

Pierre Part (eastern wetland Acadian French); Templet: Ancelet collection

St. Martin Parish (western wetland Acadian French); Latiolais: Ancelet collection

St. Martin Parish (Creole French); Greig: Ancelet and Pitre collections

St. Martin Parish (black Creole); Mitchell: Ancelet collection

St. Martin Parish (Creole of Color French); Wiltz: Ancelet collection

Acadia Parish (prairie Acadian French); Lejeune: Ancelet collection

Vermilion Parish (western coastal Acadian French); Guidry: Ancelet collection

Lafayette Parish (crossroads Acadian French); Clark: Ancelet collection

Evangeline Parish (petit Creole French); Reed: Ancelet collection

(Coushatta French); Langley: Rinzler collection

Beaumont/Lake Charles (Cajun cowboy French); Chautin: Ancelet collection

LINGUISTIC MAPS

Richard Guidry, CODOFIL/State Department of Education, has developed two maps which detail the linguistic varieties of Louisiana French. There are also four maps, developed by James Allen, University of California, Northridge, which detail the contemporary distribution and concentrations of Louisiana French speakers, black and white.

FRANÇAIS, CADIEN, CAJIN, KAHJAN?

Teaching the Problem Language in Louisiana

Barry Jean Ancelet

Originally established as a French colony in 1699, Louisiana became part of America after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Yet for a long time French remained a major force. Until the end of the nineteenth century, it was the language of the Creoles, descendants of the colonial settlers established mainly in New Orleans and along the Mississippi. It was reinforced by the arrival of the Acadians who settled in the southern part of the state after they were deported by the English from Nova Scotia in the mid-eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, a cultural blend of these varied French cultures, enriched by the native American Indian tribes and immigrants from Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland, England, and the new United States, produced the people called Cajuns whose French reflected the diversity of their origins.

But in the twentieth century the legal status of the French language changed. While earlier constitutions had recognized French as an official language of the state (Marcantel), the constitution of 1921 established English as the sole language of instruction.(1) Several generations of Cajuns and Creoles were eventually convinced that speaking French was a sign of cultural illegitimacy. Even the Catholic Church, which had previously sent French and French-Canadian missionaries to south Louisiana, quickly moved toward the exclusive use of English in religious services.(Gold and Louder)

Then, in the late 1940s, the tide seemed to turn again. Cajun soldiers in France during World War II had discovered that the language and culture they had been told to forget made them invaluable as interpreters and made surviving generally easier. After the war, returning GIs, aching from foreign wars in faraway places, sank into the hot bath of their own culture. Dance halls throughout South Louisiana once again blared the familiar sounds of homemade Cajun music.(2) The glowing embers of the Cajun cultural revival were fanned by political leaders like Dudley LeBlanc, a champion of Acadian ethnicity since the 1930s who used the 1955 bicentennial of the Acadian exile as a rallying point for the revitalization of ethnicity among the Cajuns. Yet, serious efforts would be necessary to preserve the French language, a cornerstone of the cultural foundation which was eroding at an alarming pace.(3)

In 1968, the State of Louisiana officially sanctioned the movement with the creation of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), with former U.S. Congressman James Domengeaux as its chairman (La. R.S. 25:651 et seq.). CODOFIL was immediately faced with the monumental task of creating a quality French language education program from scratch in a state with a poor track record in education of any kind. Older Cajuns who had written "I will not speak French on the schoolgrounds" a few thousand times had learned the lesson well and avoided inflicting on their own children what was long considered a cultural and linguistic deficiency. A dearth of native-born French teachers compounded the problem and CODOFIL opted to import teachers from France, Belgium and Quebec as a stopgap. This, along with a broad program of cultural exchanges, brought the Louisiana French experiment to the attention of the Francophone world. Meanwhile, activists on the home front felt that the indigeneous language and culture were once again forced into the shadows as many Cajuns dutifully echoed past criticisms, apologizing that their language was "not the real French, just broken Cajun French." Some critics also felt that bringing French into the elementary classroom immediately was short-sighted hoopla and backwards. These felt that it would have been more effective in the long run to use foreign assistance at the university level to develop a corps of native Louisiana teachers.

Some support came from the national level, though a certain amount of confusion arose from the use of federal bilingual education (Title VII) funding. A "language maintenance" provision in the original bilingual legislation was stretched in the Louisiana context to regenerate French among students who no longer learned the language from their French-speaking families. Revisions of Title VII, however, stated that the bilingual program was to be used to bring non-English-speaking students into the mainstream of the American educational system. Though Domengeaux may have appreciated the parallel support, he was never comfortable with the purpose and goals of the bilingual program, even denouncing it as a fraud. He prefered to build Louisiana's program on the acquisition of French as a regenerated second language.

The mandate of CODOFIL, as a state agency, covered all of Louisiana, including the north and the Florida parishes where virtually no French was spoken. For these reasons, CODOFIL was forced to water its wine and pressed only for the establishment of French as a second language in the elementary schools.(4) Domengeaux's political efforts met with limited success. The legislature passed an act which authorized and encouraged French in the schools without requiring it (La. R.S. 25:651). Though it did rescind the prohibition of French in the schools, the constitution of 1974 also stopped short of official recognition for the language, stating only that "the right of the people to preserve and promote their historical, cultural and linguistic origins is recognized" (article XII, section 4). Domengeaux also succeeded in obtaining a potentially powerful act (La. R.S. 17:273) under which French language instruction could be required by a petition signed by 25% of the heads of households in a given school district. It soon became clear, however, that this act was only intended to be a psychological weapon. Despite its relative success on legal and political fronts, CODOFIL consistently found itself frustrated in its attempts to generate grassroots support among the Cajuns.(5)

Early in the Louisiana French experiment, questions concerning the possibility of teaching Cajun French brought a standard response from CODOFIL spokespersons: "Why should we perpetuate illiteracy in the classroom by teaching Cajun French? It's an oral language. It doesn't have a grammar. It doesn't have a written form." This kind of rhetoric was part of an emotional apologia used to parry criticism concerning the importing of French teachers from France, Quebec and Belgium and the basing of the state's elementary French education program on "standard" French. Dismantling two of the statement's three points was easy enough. First, all languages are oral. Second, grammar, whether formally codified or not, is the structure upon which every language is based. All languages, a priori, are based on rules and conventions, without which there would be no communication, only unintelligible cackling, like so many chickens. Dismantling the third objection, concerning the lack of a written form, was slightly more complex and took a while longer.

For many, a language's pedigree is established on paper, between the covers of books. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Louisiana had a thriving literature in French written by educated Creoles. Few Cajuns, learned to write French at that time, and none did when education in English became mandatory. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of Cajuns remained illiterate in the language of their heritage. Yet Cajun French does not differ from "standard" French any more than other regional variations of the French language among speakers of comparable social and cultural background. Whether or not a particular Cajun can write, his or her language can be transcribed with adjustments for lexical and syntactical changes.(6)

For years, this argument fell on deaf ears because its proponents were trying to argue linguistic theory with politicians who were primarily interested in the public relations aspect of the Cajun question. Domengeaux, a former U. S. Congressman, kept a tight rein on the early Louisiana French movement. An office of the Quebec government, which opened in Lafayette in 1969, made him aware of the separatist problem in that province and he felt strongly that South Louisiana must never appear to be heading in a similar direction. He took great pains to demonstrate the non-confrontational nature of the Louisiana movement, noting the lack of friction between English and French-speaking regions on the question of French in the schools, and always going out of his way to point out the difference between the evolution in Louisiana and the revolution in Quebec.(7) And as

Domengeaux always noted, there was, indeed, more support for the teaching of French in north Louisiana than in Cajun country where the cultural and social stigma attached to the language had to be eliminated before any form of French would be welcomed in the elementary classroom.

Domengeaux attributed the lack of friction in Louisiana to a spirit of cooperation. It may have been due to a certain apathy instead. In New Brunswick, where a similar cultural and linguistic situation existed, a repressive and intolerant Anglo-majority prodded the Acadians into producing a considerable amount of political fireworks. In Louisiana, several factors combined to defuse any socio-cultural unrest which might have been stirred, even indirectly, by the Louisiana French renaissance movement. The southern part of the state is rich in natural resources. An able-bodied young man with no more than an eighth-grade education could easily earn $40-50,000 a year in crawfish ponds, on shrimp boats, or in the oil patch. Easy living makes a poor greenhouse for socio-cultural unrest. Further, much of the population has long had notoriously little interest in education at all. Even within the system, French was considered a luxury by educators concerned with raising the level of basic "readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic."

There were, nevertheless, a few bubbles of unrest to surface. One of the first involved the question of what form of French was being taught in Louisiana.(8) A 1973 "Sixty Minutes" report had embarrassed the movement by presenting the imported French teachers as a sort of Peace Corps in reverse, as though Louisiana needed help from foreign countries. Further, Domengeaux had a tendency to surround himself with unprofessional advisors who simply echoed his own gut reactions concerning the unsuitability of Cajun French for the classroom. In an effort to stave off local activists who complained about the importation of foreign teachers and the lack of regard for indigenous language and culture, CODOFIL brought several teams of outside consultants, which included linguist Albert Valdman and educational specialists such as Jan Lobelle and André Paquette to Louisiana to evaluate the effectiveness of the state's French educational programs. In 1982, representatives of participating foreign governments (France, Belgium and Quebec) made a similar study. However, instead of supporting the contention that there was no place for Cajun French in the classroom, as was expected by some, the reports of these experts consistently substantiated local calls for the "Louisianification" of French education.(9) Some social scientists, like anthropologist Alan Lomax(10) and the members of Projet Louisiane, a research project based in three Canadian universities which reported on this issue in several of its working papers(e.g., Gold), suggested that CODOFIL may have done as much harm as good by superimposing "standard" French in south Louisiana.

An already murky situation was further complicated by well-meaning but inadequate efforts to introduce Cajun French into the educational system. While these materials did not have the scholarship or structure to be taken seriously, they did call attention to a growing popular desire to eliminate the distance between formal language education and the people who speak it every day. Harry Jannice and Randall Whatley's Conversational Cajun French I, for example, was based on an extension class in Cajun French taught by Whatley at Louisiana State University and developed in response to an activist student movement "les Cajuns." Their presentation of Cajun French is uneven, incomplete (based almost exclusively based on Whatley's own native contemporary Avoyelles parish French) and hastily produced. It contains many typographical errors and worse inacurracies stemming from the cultural and linguistic myopia of the authors who apparently had little knowledge of the history of the French language or of the variety of dialects within Louisiana.

Nor was James Donald Faulk's Cajun French I more effective. Based on years of research, it contained a wealth of cultural and linguistic information. Three problems, however, prevented it from succeeding as a textbook. First it was a sort of glossary of words and phrases and did not present material in a sequential manner. Second it presented Faulk's own native Vermilion parish French as "standard" Cajun. Third it rendered Cajun French only in a code which Faulk devised as a pronunciation guide based on English phonetics. One can express perfectly well the way Cajuns say "He is fixing his car," with "Il est après arranger son char." Though perhaps not the vocabulary that a person from another part of the French-speaking world might use, there is no reason to teach students "Eel a ahpre ahronja son shahr," (from Cajun French I, page 150). Faulk's code would render written communication with the rest of the French-speaking world impossible, further isolating an already isolated people.

In 1978 Faulk's book was adopted for use in a short-lived class on Cajun French at L.S.U., taught by Ulysse Ricard (Romance Languages 2053). The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved Faulk's book for supplemental use in the state's elementary and secondary schools, bringing down the wrath of the CODOFIL forces. The debate raged for months in the media with sensational headlines like "Cajun Text Booted Out," Abbeville Meridional, April 23, 1979), "Author to Fight for Cajun French," (Times Picayune, April 25, 1979), "Cajun is Ragin' Over Rejected Text," (States-Item, April 25, 1979), and "Author Plans Cajun Little Big Horn," (Beaumont Enterprise, April 23, 1979), "Near Blind Teacher Vows to Preserve Cajun French," (Slidell Daily Times, April 19, 1979). The press was having a field day. Faulk was consistently described as the underdog, a victim of CODOFIL repression. Domengeaux, for his part, did his cause little good, calling the phonetic text "a bunch of chicken scratches," that would teach students sounds understood only "by a goose or a donkey," (UPI, April 19, 1979) and releasing quotes to the wire services like, "You would be a functional illiterate after reading this book," and "I'm not opposed to Mr. Faulk. I'm opposed to ignorance. I'm opposed to fraud. We don't teach redneck English. This is even worse than redneck English. This isn't even redneck French," (UPI, April 6, 1979). In answer to Faulk's claims that the qualifications of imported French teachers were questionable, Domengeaux shot back, "But they can speak better than any damn Louisianan, I'll tell you that" (AP, April 6, 1979). Eventually, Domengeaux decided that he was going to need help to defuse the Faulk affair.

The CODOFIL Chairman tested the waters and found that supporters of Cajun French in the academic community also rejected Faulk's book,(11) though not for the same reasons as he did. Both sides agreed to bury the hatchet over the Cajun French debate to fight Faulk's menace. Faulk tried desperately to resist the tide with an emotional populist plea but an unprecendented coalition of CODOFIL and academic linguists convinced BESE to overturn its approval.

Cajun French I was a pawn in a much larger game. An inordinate amount of time and effort was spent in blocking its adoption by BESE. It was not usuable as a textbook anyway and, at best, would have been glanced at occasionally by a few teachers looking for cultural information. Yet the battle lines were drawn. Faulk's book provided a catalyst for a debate about the French educational program's need to consider the Louisiana context. In building his coalition, Domengeaux adopted some of the rhetoric of his former critics to stave off Faulk's contention that CODOFIL was anti-Cajun. In his official statement to the Board, he pointed to CODOFIL's support of cultural activities such as the Cajun Music Festival and the Théâtre Cadien(12). More importantly, however, he said that Louisiana French could and should be used to enrich the teaching of French in the state. It was a subtle change, but one that would have far-reaching results.

The Faulk controversy coincided with several other factors in the late 1970s which together prompted a reconsideration of CODOFIL's hard-line on the Cajun French question. The 1974 Hommage à la Musique Acadienne had represented a new plank in CODOFIL's platform: that, in the words of Domengeaux, "language and culture are inseparable." The festival was also intended by its producers to attract young Cajuns to the music of their own heritage. The effect of the experiment was demonstrated in 1978 when eight of the twenty-two groups presented at the festival were entirely composed of Cajun musicians under the age of thirty. What had been dismissed as "nothing but chanky-chank" became the new chic.

About the same time, a few Cajuns educated in French began to write their observations and reactions in the problem language, producing the beginnings of literary movement. Unexpected but not at all accidental, this emerging literature was at first an emotional response to Domengeaux's insistance that Cajun French could not be written. In 1977, "Jean l'Ours et la Fille du Roi," a play based on a Cajun folktale, was prepared and presented in Cajun French by an amateur theatrical troupe called Nous Autres" to suprised audiences in small towns acros Acadiana. Nous Autres eventually was reformed as Le Thèâtre Cadien which followed with other plays, including "Martin Weber et les Marais-bouleurs," in 1978, and "Mille Misères," in 1979. These plays made ingenious use of the oral aspect of the theater to communicate this budding literature to audiences who were unable to read French. Meanwhile, in 1978, Revon Reed, a retired schoolteacher from Mamou, Louisiana, published a book in Montreal about Cajun culture in Cajun French. Destined primarily for the Quebec market, Lache pas la patate was nevertheless the first work of Louisiana French literature since the turn of the century. Also in 1978, a poem by Zachary Richard was read at a presentation of "Paroles et Musique," in Quebec. Later that same year, a local version of "Paroles et Musique" gathered some ten contemporary Louisiana French poets and songwriters to perform in Lafayette. Some of these newly discovered authors provided material for Cris sur le bayou, an anthology published in 1980, also in Montreal. In 1981, the National Bilingual Materials Development Center for French, in New Hampshire, published Littérature française de la Louisiane: Anthologie, which placed transcribed oral literature and contemporary works alongside eighteenth and nineteenth century texts. In 1982, the

Center for Louisiana Studies at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, which had published a version of "Jean l'Ours et la Fille du Roi" in 1979, created a special series called Les Editions de la Nouvelle Acadie to publish more contemporary Louisiana French literature.

Things also began to change on the educational front. In 1978, CODOFIL and State Department of Education established the Second Language Specialist program so that native Cajun and Creole French-speaking teachers might eventually begin replacing the imported teachers. The program proved quite effective in South Louisiana. It ultimately fell victim to its own success, however, as teachers in non-French-speaking areas demanded the same opportunity. The program, designed for South Louisiana teachers who already spoke French, quickly fell apart in North Louisiana and the Florida parishes. Nevertheless, CODOFIL and the State Department of Education pursued new avenues to generate native Louisiana French teachers while continuing to import teachers from France, Belgium and Quebec.

Until recently, the experiment to revive French in Louisiana remained theoretical. It had not yet made the trip home from school. Older Cajuns who had written "I will not speak French on the schoolgrounds" as children had learned their lesson well and were convinced that their language was not fit for the classroom. Children who learned French in the CODOFIL program in the early 1970s inadvertently pushed the native dialect farther into the corner when they tried their book-learned French on their parents and grandparents. The little bit of formal, academic French that these children learned (more or less well) in the classroom sounded unfamiliar to older Cajuns who immediately thought that they could not understand because their own French was inadequate.(13)

Even the imported foreign assistants became interested in making the French educational program more culturally relevant. In 1977, Belgian teacher Bernard Prignot led the formation of Nous Autres, a theatrical troupe which developed plays based on regional tradition and presented them in Cajun French. French conseiller pédagogique André Paul Perales was instrumental in organizing "Paroles et Musique," the first presentation of emerging Louisiana French literature in 1978. For its own reasons, Quebec seemed especially interested in resisting the monopoly of French French. Québecois conseiller pédagogique Jan Lobelle was one of the first to begin adapting materials to the Louisiana context. Philippe Gustin, a Belgian exchange teacher who produced French-language radio programs for CODOFIL, eventually became its director and was instrumental in making the organization more responsive to the local culture.

Around the same time, Richard Guidry was hired by the Department of Education to supervise the teaching of French in the Acadiana area. This ws considered by some to be unusual because Guidry was an ardent defender of Cajun French and an outspoken critic of the policy of unchecked cultural and linguistic superimposition from outside. A native Louisiana French speaker himself who had gone through the educational process and had taught in the elementary bilingual program in St. Martin parish, he also understood teachers needed more than philosophy and good intentions. He quietly set about the preparation of materials and methods to incorporate Louisiana French into the classroom. His first materials, Les Jeunes Louisianais (1981) and La Famille Richard (1983), served as models for the use of native vocabulary and expressions to enrich the teaching of French. More importantly, his models were based on a regional approach. He underscored the sub-regional varieties of Cajun French language and culture. Teachers were encouraged to add to the models by plugging into the culture of their own specific areas. A cultural and linguistic orientation program was designed to give foreign teachers a feel for the historical, cultural and linguistic context in which they were going to work. An important point of this orientation was that these teachers should try to build upon the linguistic and cultural background of students and their families, instead of trying to replace it. They were encouraged to avoid terms like "standard" or "proper" French which contributed to the denigration of Cajun French by implying that it was "substandard" or "improper" by comparison.

The University of Southwestern Louisiana also realized early on the importance of adding a cultural and historical approach to the teaching of French and took an active role in the Louisiana French movement. The Department of Foreign Languages offered one of the first and most successful of the SLS programs. Courses like "Louisiana French Literature," "Louisiana French Folklore," and "Cajun and Creole Music" were developed and offered in the afternoons and evenings so that teachers could take advantage of them. French professors David Barry and Shirley Abshire even took on an age-old taboo and developed a course on Cajun French with the support of an Ethnic Heritages program grant from HEW in 1979. Special workshops like "Jolie Blonde à l'école" were designed to guide teachers in the regionalization of their French classes. A multi-disciplinary Francophone Studies program, developed with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, stimulated an academic environment which plugged Louisiana into the French-speaking world. Faculty members discussed the survival of French in Louisiana at conferences and in publications. The University's Center for Louisiana Studies published books and journals about the culture and history of French Louisiana. Its Folklore and Folklife Program collected the oral literature and oral history of the region and recycled this information in articles, books, records, radio and television programs, and organized live performances of traditional music and storytelling. Other universities moved in the same direction. Louisiana State University has developed a francophone studies center which includes consideration of the Louisiana context, and Nicholls State University recently created an Acadian Studies Center.

Until recently, one of the important features still missing from the French language educational program was a carefully prepared, culturally appropriate textbook. For years, the program used the Frère Jacques method, primarily because it was provided at no cost by France. An adequate method, it lacked the cultural tuning desired by many of CODOFIL's critics. Whatley's and Faulk's efforts, though well-intentioned, were not remotely usable in the classroom. Finally, David Marcantel, a lawyer and member of the Jeff Davis parish school board, produced Notre Langue Louisianaise, a structured, pedagogically sound textbook which adds regional vocabulary and expressions to complement the teaching of elementary French. BESE's slowness to adopt even Marcantel's non-threatening text may show that the psychological climate has not yet undergone the basic change which would enable the educational system to tap the Louisiana French resource before it disappears completely.

One of CODOFIL's early public relations slogans was "L'école a détruit le français; l'école doit le restaurer." Yet, while a strong French educational program is crucial to the preservation of French in Louisiana, it has become increasingly clear that the effort must go beyond the schools if it is to succeed. The survival of French in Louisiana depends on the preservation and development of a French environment, including radio and television programs, books and magazines, road signs and billboards. Of course, written French is often lost on the majority of French-speaking Cajuns and Creoles which remains illiterate in its native language, and many French programs are beyond the elementary French student. Yet, languages do not exist in a vaccuum. If someone is to bother learning French, there must be something worth doing, reading, seeing and hearing in the language. Conversely, the preservation of the language is vital to the survival of the culture. To be sure, Cajuns and Creoles will eat gumbo and crawfish at least well into the twenty-first century, but is Jolie Blonde sung in English still Cajun music? And where does Creole zarico end and Afro-American rhythm-and-blues begin?

There are signs of renewed vigor. On the cultural front, approval from the outside has regenerated pride on the inside. Led by larger-than-life chef Paul Prudhomme, Cajun cooking has become the latest rage from New York to San Francisco. Cajun music, once dismissed as "nothing but chanky-chank," has blazed a new trail, infiltrating radio and television. Dewey Balfa's folk-artists-in-the-schools program has even taken it into the classroom. In 1984, zarico king Clifton Chenier won a Grammmy. In 1986, South Louisiana French music swept all five nominations in the ethnic music category. Cajun fiddler Michael Doucet and his group Beausoleil recently performed before a sell-out crowd at New York's Carnegie Hall. On the educational front, the Board of Elementary of Secondary Education voted in 1984 to require five years of second language in elementary schools. Also in 1984, Louisiana State University began requiring at least two years of a high school second language for admission.

It is clear that Louisiana is involved in a complex and emotional experiment which has captured the attention of many. Speculations on the future of French in the state abound and range from shameless optimism to dire pessimism. It may be that all this current activity is simply too late. Even the most zealous Louisiana French activists admit that the French-speaking population continues to decline at an alarming rate and that preserving French as a native language is a far-fetched dream. Most contemporary parents are passive bilinguals at best and would not be able to pass the language on to their children if they wanted to. But with enough money and enlightened educational leadership, any community can learn a second language. In south Louisiana the presence of a culturally and historically appropriate context only adds to the possibilities.

The odds are great, but so are the stakes. Many activists feel that, with realistic financial support from the educational system at state and local levels, with a major public relations effort, and with a mountain of luck, it may be possible to regenerate French as a functional second language in the state. For this to happen, the whole system must be preserved and developed: movies, literature, radio, television, music, road and business signs, etc. The standard social equation, 9 French-speakers + 1 English-speaker = 10 English-speakers, must be reversed. Efforts to preserve/regenerate French in the schools must be underscored with efforts to make the language more than just an enrichment exercise. The one thing those working in the Louisiana French experiment can't afford to admit, publically or to themselves, is that there is no hope. The only way to give the experiment a chance to succeed is to postulate that it can work. As contemporary Louisiana French poet Jean Arceneaux put it, "*Ecrire en français, c'est parier sur l'avenir,*" or as Mathé Allain put it, "*C'est en affirmant la chose qu'on la crée*."(Allain and Ancelet 1983)

FOOTNOTES

(1) Louisiana State Constitution, Article 12, Section 12, 1921. This English only position had also been included in the Reconstruction era constitutions (1864 and 1868). See J.H. Domengeaux.

(2) For a detailed account of the development of Cajun music and a discussion of its value as a barometer of Louisiana French culture, see Barry Jean Ancelet, The Makers of Cajun Music (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984).

(3) Estimates of the number of French-speakers in Louisiana have ranged from a few hundred thousand to over a million and a half. Several factors make this number difficult to pin down beyond speculation. First, Cajuns are prone to avoid scrutiny and substantial segments of the population have historically declined to participate in such surveys. (As early as the 1654 census in Acadia, several colonists hedged or refused outright to answer questions, and an 1810 census taker working in south Louisiana complained that many Acadians refused to cooperate with him.) Second, many Cajuns who speak French among themselves have learned to avoid speaking their language to outsiders. Even cooperative Cajuns might have a problem answering a question like "Do you speak French?" Those who speak English well enough to be asked are also most likely to consider French a social stigma and consequently to hide their ability to speak the language.

(4) The Second Language Specialist program, for example, was eventually dismantled because of the state-wide scope of CODOFIL. The program was originally designed to regear native Louisiana French speaking teachers to enable them to teach in French the subjects they had taught for years in English. In South Louisiana, this was possible with a relatively short period of intensive preparation. However, when the program was demanded in predominately Anglophone north Louisiana as well, it was necessarily doomed to failure.

(5) Part of the problem is undeniably a basic resistance to social organization among the Cajuns. A look at the history of the Acadian revival in Louisiana since Dudley Leblanc's first pilgrimages to New Brunswick in the early 1930s shows much emotional fervor among an Acadian "elite" which was consistantly hampered by an inability to organize or even reach the population. See also John-Smith Thibodeaux, Les Franophones de Louisiane (Paris: Editions Entente, 1977), for a critical study of CODOFIL's role in Louisiana.

(6) Many Creole specialists have opted for the creation of new writing systems which seek, as Robert Chaudenson put it, "d'éviter les incohérences du code graphique français." Though divided at first, today most serious Louisiana French specialists seem to agree that Cajun French is a variant of the French language and is best rendered using the French system with minor adjustments in order to avoid, as Shirley Abshire put it, "d'orpheliner le français cadien."

(7) Ironically, an English-Canadian political scientist, Raymond Rogers, was a major influence in Domengeaux's decision to pursue the preservation of French in Louisiana. Rogers was responsible for much of the research and language used in the establishment of CODOFIL. The Quebec government's first delegate to Louisiana was Léo Leblanc, a bilingual Acadian married to an American. Leblanc collaborated closely with CODOFIL personnel in forming policy and strategies for the Louisiana French movement between 1968 and 1972, and consistently cautioned Chairman Domengeaux to steer away from activities which may smack of separatism in the eyes of state and federal government officials.

(8) In 1977, Richard Guidry went on the air to contradict CODOFIL Chairman Jimmmie Domengeaux's claim that Cajun French was unfit for the classroom. Later that same year, Quebec government delegate Jules Poisson hosted a meeting of a group of young activists who called themselves l'Association des Francophones en Louisiane. About the same time, a group of disenchanted L.S.U. students including Randall Whately, Debbie Clifton, and Robert LeBlanc, organized a group to bring pressure on the Department of French to add a course on Cajun French. This group, which called itself Les Cajuns, also criticized CODOFIL for its importation of teachers from France, Quebec and Belgium.

(9) E.g., in the conclusion of the "1978 Evaluation of Louisiana State-Wide CODOFIL French Program," the evaluators based the future success "of Louisiana's efforts to preserve and strengthen the French language and culture" in part on "the careful development of a plan to build from the French linguistic, cultural, and human resources of Louisiana..."

(10) Lomax criticized Domengeaux and CODOFIL during his guest lecture before the Louisiana Folklore Society meeting in Lafayette in April, 1980. New Orleans AP correspondant Woody Baird eventually got wind of it and his story hit the wire service on June 19 and 20, 1980.

(11) Even ardent CODOFIL critic Debbie Clifton, who led the effort to demand a course on Cajun French from the L.S.U. Department of Romance Languages, had "reservations about the phonetic recording of the language becoming the written version" (from "Author Hopes to Help Preserve Language of Cajun French," State Times, August 19, 1977).

(12) "Statement of Position of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), James Domengeaux, Chairman, in Support of the Recommendation of the Textbook and Media Advisory Council of the Department of Education Concerning Its Action in Refusing to Authorize the Supplemental Use of the Textbook Cajun French One, authored by James Donald Faulk, in French Language Curriculum Instruction in Louisiana's Schools," unpublished manuscript.

(13) If both speakers were literate, then this might not happen. But most older native speakers have little or no French education. Their knowledge of the language is based exclusively on oral tradition. In such a context, changes in vocabulary and syntax and even in supportive linguistic features like rhythm and intonation can seriously interfere with communication. Thus even familiar words pronounced in a slightly different manner or used in a slightly different cadence can sound foreign. This situation is reflected in Louisiana oral tradition. A current joke tells of the child who returns home to ask his grandmother "Comment allez-vous?" The grandmother is baffled and asks the child in English, "What is a tallé?"

PART X THE PRESENT: ECONOMY AND CULTURE CHANGE

PEOPLE OF THE WETLANDS

Glen Pitre

Even among those who decry their assimilation, there has long been speculation as to how Cajuns, as an ethnic group, were able to so long resist the overwhelming force of the American melting pot. Often innate conservatism, a gut-felt resistance to change, explains what seems an annomolly.

Unfortunately that theory will not only not hold water, it won't even hold mud. Throughout their history, the Cajuns have shown themselves amazingly adept at adjusting to change when it was forced upon them, but also good at embracing progress when it filtered into their community. The spurts of growth in Louisiana agriculture and fisheries can usually be traced to technological advances or new markets. The generation of Cajun oilfield entrepreneurs shows that such adaptability was not limited to traditional occupations.

Another theory will have to be found. One concept it will have to embrace is that, far from despising the concept of a melting pot, the Cajuns liked the idea so much they started one of their own. Not part of any great urban center, on the sidelines of the routes of westward migration, the Cajuns were numerically superior in their own region. In-migration, while considerable, did not usually consist of large self-contained groups. The Acadians who had settled the swamps, prairies and marshes absorbed all comers, and in doing so, became Cajun, a hybred.

Within a generation only the spelling of the name sometimes remained. The Spanish Segura, the German Hoffpauir, the Portugese

Barrios, the English Edwards, the Swiss Egle, the Irish Callahan, the Italian Anselmi were speaking only French.

A Golden Meadow woman in her 90s tell of the marriage of her parents. Her mother was a local Cajun girl who could speak only French. Her father was a German school teacher, who knew that language and English. Evidently they learned to communicate for they had thirteen children. Of the thirteen, only the baby knew a little English. None knew a word of German.

In addition to ethnic mingling, their has also been cosiderable inter-racial mixing between Cajuns and blacks, Native Americans, and Asians, though not as much as the national press, confused by Louisiana's ethnic patchwork, would sometimes imply.

Foreign groups

Germans

The Germans arrived in Louisiana in two ways. The first group, arriving in the early to mid 1700s, settled on the Mississippi River above New Orleans in an area that came to be known as the German Coast. They were farmers brought in to grow crops that might make the New Orleans colony self-sufficient in agriculture. Largely they did this. At one point several of these Louisiana Germans were hanged for plotting to overthrow Spanish rule.

These early Germans were soon assimilated into the growing French and later American community around them. Their chief legacy is in place names: Edgaard, Lutcher, Hahnville, and Des Allemands (French for "Some Germans").

The second big influx of Germans came much later and further west. In the 1880s, when the railroad opened up the southwest Louisiana prairies to agriculture, many of those immigrints arriving to take up the plow were newly arrived Germans. Perhaps their most famous settlement was Robert's Cove.

This group, too, became either American or Cajun. Their arrival, however, had a lasting effect on Cajun music for they brought with them the diatonic accordion that changed the face of Cajun music.

Spanish

For much of its history Louisiana was ruled by the Spanish. Spain, a relatively small country with a huge empire, could offer but little to the peopling of this not especially wealthy corner of its holdings. Settlement was often done by proxy. The early German settlers are one example. The Isleños discussed below are another. Even many if not the majority of Acadians arrived in Louisiana on Spanish ships.

Spanish influence persists in the architecture of New Orleans' so-called French Quarter, in the city named New Iberia, and in cattle ranching techniques that had been adopted in Louisiana long before Americans were to develop their own breed of cowboy.

Isleños

Spanish speaking Canary Islanders were brought to Louisiana in the 1790s. They reside almost exclusively in St. Bernard parish. While not assimilated into the Cajun culture linguistically, their occupations and lifestyles mirrored their French speaking neighbors in other Louisiana coastal parishes.

Italians

Italians who became Cajun generally were spillovers from the port of New Orleans with its substantial Italian community. Individuals, rather than large groups, would resettle in Cajun country, probably mostly because of economic opportunity. No doubt some had been fisherman back in Italy. The number of Italian-Cajun decoy carvers suggests that many had brought with them woodcarving skills or adopted stonecarving ability to new purpose.

White Protestant American

The sugar families

The appelation is perhaps a misnomer because many were actually raising cotton or rice. Others were entrepreneurs building railroads and the like. From the Louisiana Purchase to the 1840s and after, they arrived to build or buy plantations, fleeing lands in Virginia, Mississippi, and other parts of the South that had been exhausted by cotton.

While a numeric minority, they replaced the Creole as the cultural elite. With often a few interelated families controlling parish courthouse and local bank, they held tight the reins of power through the trying times of reconstruction and up to the mass plantation foreclosures of the 1920s and 30s.

This group was not monolithically Protestant. Wealthy Acadians (the Moutons of Lafayette) or Creoles (the Leverts of St. Martinville or Peltiers of Thibodaux) might be considered members of the same group, a structure based on class and common interest rather than religion. Before the Civil War, there were even blacks who had attained such a degree of wealth, bought by the sweat of their humbler cousins in the fields.

Mid-west farmers.

Responding to broadsides distributed throughout the mid-west farmers came to what had been heralded as "the new corn belt". Prairies opened by the railroad, wetlands reclaimed by levees and pumps, thousands of acres stood ready for the plow.

Though claims of fertility had been highly exagerated, especially on the reclamation lands, many did prosper and stay on. On the prairies between Lafayette and Lake Charles one can see the farmhouses, different from those of their Cajun neighbors, that reflect their mid-west origin.

Texiens

"Barroom brawls between the Cajuns and the roughnecks or rednecks out of North Louisiana, they didn't quite get along too good at first but they really came around and became, you know, after they lived together for awhile it was pretty nice."

- ABEL T. P. PREJEAN

Texiens (Texans), etrangées (stangers), or Americains, whatever they were called the influx that followed the discovery of oil in Louisiana diluted for the first time that vast numerically superiority of French speakers in Louisiana. It began with the century; it would seem now that it peaked in the mid-1980s.

If they were Texiens, it was because so many came from Texas, or seemed to. For the locals lucky enough to get jobs in the early years, they found for the first time a place where French was not the language of the workplace. A Leeville man remembers being given the worst job on the crew after misunderstanding his boss and bringing sandpaper back from town instead of the toilet paper his bossed had actually asked for.

The blend was not always easygoing. A former Terrebonne Parish sheriff remembers having to "watch the dance halls" on Saturday nights for the trouble that inevitably erupted.

Blacks

"It was hard for a black person around here to get a job. The wages were so small. See there was all this field work around here, they paid them next to nothing."

- CASTRO MURRAY

For a discussion of this group, see Ancelet Article.

Native Americans

"I was born over here on the Isle in a palmetto house....yes in a palmetto house with a dirt floor."

- MRS. JOSEPH NAQUIN

Historical

On arrival of white man, the Avoyel, the Houma, the Okelousa, the Bayougoula, and the Tangipahoa, each claimed a stretch of the great river south of the powerful Natchez tribe, along with the Quinapissas who attacked La Salle's expedition to discover the mouth of the river. Washa, Chawasha, and Chitimacha occupied the Lafourche and Atchafalaya basins. The Opelousa had the inland prairie while the Atakapas ranged along the coast from Bayou Teche into what is now Texas. (Bulletin 43, Bureau of American Ethnology).

There are three tribes of Native Americans in Louisiana whose members have spoken predominantly French in living memory. Of the Lacombe, on the northeast shore of Lake Ponchartrain, only a few people claiming descent remain.

Much more numerous are the Tunica, based in Avoyelles Parish. Organized, with a chief, they are currently in a court fight to reclaim relics dug up by a historian and shipped off to Harvard University.

Houma

The largest group are the Houma, living in the marshes of Terrebonne, Lafourche, Jefferson, and Plaquemines Parishes. Originally based on the Mississippi (the red stick that gave Baton Rouge its name originally marked their hunting grounds) they were pushed further and further into the marshes by white farmers and planters. Never recognized as a tribe by the Federal government, they only successfully achieved integration into the white communities with the coming of black Civil Rights victories in the 1960s.

A friend of the man who ran the first picture show in Dulac remembered his buddy had a problem. The plans he had bought and had his theatre built to were made to have whites on the ground floor and blacks in the balcony. But he had three groups to keep segregated, whites, blacks, and Indians. After much debate, he ran a fence across the downstairs, cordoning off the first several rows for the Indians. Front row seats were no favor though. The theatre was cooled by fans blowing at the audience over huge blocks of ice. Anyone in the first few rows would have a shower distracting him from his picture as the ice melted.

Terrebonne's parish's seat is called Houma, and the minor league baseball team once based there was called the Houma Indians.

Asians

Chinese

Chinese national were instrumental in development of Louisiana's shrimping and rice industries. Many were to grow quite wealthy as brokers, exporters and entrepreneurs. World War II, and the turmoil it caused in Asia, was to close many of those markets, at least temporarily. By the 1950s the dried shrimp business was all but over as refrigeration and a rising standard of living nationally opened domestic markets for the Louisiana catch. The rice business as well had changed. American rice men, of Creole or American descent, began to deal directly with their Asian buyers. Chinese Americans who remained generally settled in New Orleans and blended into the local community. AS a measure of their acceptance, the current Sheriff of Jefferson Parish, the bedroom community for New Orleans, is Harry Lee, of Chinese descent. As a measure of their assimilation, his campaign spots always pictured him in a cowboy hat.

Chinese fit into a darker side of Louisiana's history as well. When laws were passed early in this century to bar the immigration of Orientals into this country, Louisiana's tangled coastline once again became the home to smugglers of human cargo. This time it was not slaves brought against their will, but rather free men and women who had paid dearly for the opportunity.

The conditions of their voyage were worse if anything. Fishing boats would go out into international waters to meet schooners coming from Panama or Havanna. The would be immigrints would climb down the long rope ladders to the small fishing luggers, only to find out their new Captain's quandary.

He could not afford to be seen with them, yet there was no room for them below decks. The solution was to have them climb into barrels, which were then capped. For the next several hours they were curled up and cramped, sniffing for fresh air at the bung hole, on the deck of a vessel never intended for the open water through which it traveled.

Brought safely to the railhead at Lockport, where they were smuggled onto freight cars, it is said the Captain received $1500 a head for his passangers. A lot of money for a Captain and his small crew, but if caught they lost the boat and years of liberty in a Federal penitentiary.

There is a story of one captain who, spotting a Coast Guard cutter approaching him in the distance, rolled the barrels off his deck, Chinamen and all. Their screams were only silenced when the barrels finally sunk. As the cutter got closer the Captain congratulated himself for his quick thinking. But wait. Not possible! But it was true. The vessel he had sighted was a pleasure craft, out of Grand Isle on an outing, not the Coast Guard at all. The Captain had drowned several people and lost a fortune for nothing.

It is said he did not want to talk about that trip again, except to sometimes mutter to himself. He started to play with a piece of string, some said a piece one of the victims had dropped. It was just a nervous habit. As weeks then months passed, he spoke less and less to others, muttered more to himself. He had to sell his boat because no one would go out with him. He played with the string, making cat's cradles, tying and untying knots, until he was in a world of his own, with the string, and his mutterings, and the ghosts of the people he had murdered.

Phillipinos

Phillipinos arrived in Louisiana as early as 1765. First at St Malo in Lake Borne, then at Manilla Village in the Barataria estuary, they built thriving if remote communities in the eary 1800s.

According to Ruth S. Limjuco of the Jefferson Historical Society, the first arrivals were escapees from near-slavery in the Spanish galleons trafficing between their homeland and Mexico. Jumping ship, blending into the Indian population, they made their way east in time to be among the troops that Lafitte offered Andrew Jackson for the battle of New Orleans.

Manilla Village is just a few miles from Lafitte's former hideaway on Grande Terre. At its peak in the 1920s and 30s, its population was measured in the hundreds, including a few Chinese, Italians, and Cajuns. The whole village, including Post Office, General Store, homes, and massive shrimp drying platforms was up on eight to ten feet high, because the entire site contained not a speck of dry ground. To come or go was by water.

Manilla Village's fortunes fell with that of the shrimp drying industry in the late 30s but the village was not completely abandoned until Hurrican Betsy blew away every building but one in 1965.

Vietnamese

The settlement of Vietnamese in Louisiana is of recent vintage. Many have entered the seafood industry, as fishermen and on the processing side. Peeling shrimp, crabs, and crawfish is often prefered to other available work because the language requirements are not high and because pay is determined by output rather than hours, allowing an industrious worker to earn more.

Changes

World War II

Southern Louisiana felt the War at home as well as following it from afar. German U-boats were active in the Gulf of Mexico, sinking hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping in the waters off the mouth of the Mississippi. Trawlers were converted to submarine chasers. A blimp base went up in Houma. The Thibodaux Boiler Works converted to manufacturing ammunition.

Local hospitals were jammed, but it was all hush-hush, fearing knowledge of the extent of the losses to be bad for national morale.

There were rumors that among the wreckage of a sunk U-boat were French bread wrappers from a local bakery; fishermen eyed each other suspiciously.

Patriotism ran strong. In Cut Off, the parish priest was run out of town for having a German name and a hobby of ham radios. Prior knowledge of the Japanese had come from local Chinese in the shrimp drying industry, none too favorable, and the fact that the Japanese had shelled the US gunboat Panay, killing two sailors, an incident in the early thirties that almost led the two countries to war back then. One of the two dead sailors was from Raceland.

The dislocations caused by World War II were to change Louisiana as much or more than the rest of America. Labor shortages caused by so many young men going into uniform found a temporary solution in German and Italian POWs hired out to cut sugarcane. Except for only Texas and California, Louisiana housed more prisoners than any other state. Fraternization with the locals was common if not encouraged. In most areas they are remembered fondly. (Lafayette Advertiser Centennial Edition, 4/22/84)

In the long run however, the labor shortage built a pent up demand for tractors that demobilizing factories were eager to build. It hastened a mechanization that had already begun at the time of the first world war. Tens of thousands of workers (let alone mules) were no longer needed on the plantation.

The labor needs of the war had given many Cajuns their first opportunity to see beyond the southern half of their state. Many never came back. Within the state the West Bank of Jefferson Parish, across from New Orleans became a mecca as jobs opened in the plants going up along the river. Many Cajuns served as translators as American armies moved into France, a fact alluded to in American popular culture in the early 60s TV series COMBAT. Vic Morrow the sergeant called his GI translator "Cage".

On other fronts, French was less useful. Many men returned fully stigmatized about their native tongue and accent, determined that their children would not share such humiliation.

Language and education

> There was a man down the road here use to have a general merchandise store and he spoke not a word of English just French. And the salesman in question spoke only English. He did not understand French and Vice Versa. So this particular man, merchant, had a special order this day you see and the salesman come in and the merchant was glad to see him, shook his hand and evertthing. They'd make themselves understood, he'd point to a certain thing on the shelf, 1 dozen, 2 dozen, they'd make themselves understood. Well this particular day he wanted get a pot de chambre, you know what that is? He showed it to him and said "gross...gross". He wanted a large Chamber pot. The salesman smiled and shook his hand and wrote it down. Two weeks later, the paddlewheel used to deliver the freight parked in back of the grocery store. 144...one gross of pots de chambre. Thats the truth.
>
> \- SHERWIN GUIDRY

Media

French language broadcasting in southeast Louisiana began with the advent of local radio stations. Currently a Golden Meadow station broadcasts twelve hours of French programming a week - KLEB, 1600 AM, 6- 8am M-S. Another in Houma runs seven and one half hours - KHOM 104.1 FM, 4:30-6am M-F.

Both consist of music, news, and weather, with most if not all commercials in French as well. Early morning time slots are preferred because they do not disrupt the stations' English language programming, they fit well with the older demographics of the listening audience, and are of service to early rising fishermen, one of the few local industries where French remains the primary language of the workplace.

This author was a French language disc jockey for two years. Each and every day requests would be called in to broadcast tidbits of family news or greetings to loved ones out fishing in the Gulf.

More limited weekend French programming has appeared from time to time on New Orleans stations WWNO- FM, WWOZ-FM, WNOE-AM, and WSHO-AM.

In addition, Cable Channel 5 on Callais Cablevision, based in GoldenMeadow but serving large parts of Lafourche and Terrebonne as well as a portion of Jefferson Parish, has a daily half hour news and interview program in French. Cox Cable, serving metropolitan New Orleans, for a long time ran Rendezvous, a weekly hour devoted to imported French programming.

Oil

"The Abercrombie Company came here to drill for Texaco. I'm the first they rented a boat from to go set up a rig at Barre. We went in my small boat with the engineer to pick out a spot to put a derrick"

- JUNIUS LAPEYROUSE

"After a few years they were in need of additional employees and the people started drifting gradually away from farming and seafood."

- HAYLES BONVILLAIN

Oil brought prosperity to the Cajun country and built a middle class. After the first few years, when their value as workers was proven, they began to fill the ranks, not just of the workers, but also of the speculators, entrepreneurs, and inventors.

The marsh buggy was a local invention. Imagine a car with its four tires each six feet high, three feet across, with very deep tread, and made of steel. It moves over land, water, or anything in between.

When oil went offshore, near Morgan City in 1947, there was a need for offshore support boats. It was a technology that had not yet been developed. Local Cajun seaman stepped into the breach, and some of them made fortunes. Hauling water with a shrimp boat was sometimes the seed of fleets that would later be counted by dozen. Such entrepreneurs could have boats in the Gulf, the North Sea, off Nigeria and Venuzuela, boats on four continents. Their French might be better than their English but with numbers they are best of all.

For others oilfield work coexists with more traditional occupations. The typical oilfield work schedule is seven days on, seven days off. A week at a time allows a family to leave for their camp in the marsh, to run paupières, or trot lines, or crawfish traps.

Boat types

Offshore oil production requires many specialized types of vessels, many of which were first developed, or at least improved on, by Louisiana shipyards. It has been a long time since the traditional Louisiana lugger was adapted to haul fuel and water to the early inshore platforms.

Below are some of the vessels which are used in the Louisiana.

Supply Boat

100′ to 200′ feet long for offshore waters, with a high bow and forward cabin and a long flat back deck for hauling cargo. In addition to the forward facing wheelhouse, the boat can be steered from a second wheel atop the cabin overlooking the back deck. With twin screws and on larger boats a bow-thruster (a propeller set in a channel cut through the hull that can push the bow port or starboard), a good captain can exercise amazing control even in bad weather.

This author has seen, in ten to twelve foot seas, a captain hold his boat just feet from the steel legs of an offshore platform, steady enough for men in hard hats and work vests to swing on a rope a la Tarzan onto the back deck. The roughnecks and production personnel appreciate a Captain good enough to get that close in bad weather.

Otherwise the boat stands off and they must be lowered in a personnel basket. A deck that rises ten feet in a second or two, especially if combined with a novice crane operator dropping the basket too low, can provide for nasty collisions. By the time you recover from the impact the deck has gone down again and you're still in the basket. I've seen them bounce four or five times before they finally fell out.

Crew Boat

Crew boats are the busses of the estuaries and Gulf. They range from 20′ or less for inland canals, 30′-40′ for bays, and 70′ to over 100′ for the Gulf. Remember, these boats are built for speed. They have to compete with helicopters. Even the largest of them have planing hulls; they go fast enough to ride on top the water instead of cut through it. Imagine the biggest speed boat you have ever seen. Don't even try to imagine the pounding as it runs across a heavy sea, rising on the swell almost airborne then falling so hard you can hardly hold onto the head.

Tug Boat

Tug boats are probably the most familiar work boat type to most Americans. Common on waterways such as the Intracoastal canal are its smaller cousin the push boat. The push boat's bow is flat, squared off, so it can butt right up to the back of a barge.

Jack-up Barge

A jack-up barge is generally self propelled, but its most prominent feature are its three are four legs climbing high into the air as the barge travels. When it gets where it wants to go, it finds a footing and jacks itself high out of the water. The vessel is used when stable but very temporary platforms are needed, such as for seismograph work.

Quarter Boats

Quickly disappearing, quarter boats were used as housing for rig workers. They look a bit like an old time river boat, an oval bowed deck covered to two or three stories with cabin. Quarter boats, when put out to pasture, sometimes find their way to a berth by the bank of a roadside bayou, to become a genre of roadhouse you'll not likely see many places.

Derrick Barge

A huge barge carrying the drilling rig and its attendant machinery, production offices, and often housing, the derrick barge has an even larger cousin called a semi-submersable. It has legs like an actual platform that fill with water and sink to the bottom.

Sometimes moved around the Gulf by having tugboats pull up its anchors, carry them a distance, then drop them again. The rig then pulls itself toward the anchors. Slow moving but a big piece of equipment.

Drillships are self propelled but nevertheless require their own fleet of support vessels, such as supply boats to support divers, barges for drilling mud, barges to haul oil if it is found until a pipeline can be built and a permanent platform erected, if oil is found.

PEOPLE

Nicknames

When strangers look at a small town south Louisiana phone book, they usually notice the preponderance of a few last names, and not the Smiths and Jones they are used to. What next catches their eye are the nicknames in the listings. Usually in quotes between first and last names, they sometimes replace the first name altogether.

The flowery names that most Cajun children were bestowed with a generation or two ago were invariably shortened in common usage. Alida or Florida became Da, or at best DaDa. Elenora became NoNor. Nor were the boys spared. No Joeseph, jr., for them. You were 'Tit Joe (_petit_, or little). Justilien becomes 'Tit Yien. Little Yien, when you are six feet tall and in your late seventies. Then there are the colors. This author has personally known four 'Tit Blacks, three 'Tit Blues, and at least one 'Tit Brown.

Cajun nicknames will follow their owners to other places and into other pusuits. In the 3/23/1970 Newsweek, under the cover story, "Women In Revolt", profiled was the leader of New York's "most militant feminist faction", Ti-Grace Atkinson. Ti-Grace, the magazine told us, "is Cajun for 'Little Grace'".

Akin to nicknaming was the custom of like named siblings, often a mean trick in large cajun families. An example describes it best.

A few years ago the Lafourche Daily Comet ran an obituary for 82 year old Winnie Grabert Breaux. The article listed Winnie's brothers and sisters, living and dead: Wiltz, Wilda, Wenise, Witnese, William, Willie, Wilfred, Wilson, Weldon, Ernest, Norris, Darris, Dave, Inez, and Lena.

Music (Southeast Louisiana)

"Every Saturday night everybody went to the dance. Before that, before dance halls, there were families with old phonographs and records. They'd play the records and we'd dance in the yard. We'd dance, I learned to dance in the yard barefooted with the young boys and girls...we'd dance barefooted in the yard."

- LAISE LEDET

The southeast Louisiana branch of Cajun music differs significantly from its kindred of the southwestern prairies. The two primary differences were both caused by proximity to other influences.

The first was that of a lack of proximity. The Germans move to the southwestern prairies and bringing with them the accordion settled too far away to have any direct influence. Though the accordion did filter east, its influence was negligible, and easily swept away by the rising tide of string music in the 1940s.

The other case of proximity was the urban center of New Orleans. There were more radio stations sooner, providing both a source of direction and inspiration and an outlet for showcasing talent within an easy day's drive. The music was more varied allowing expression is several different musical styles without the necessity of packing up and leaving the area.

Perhaps the most prominent southeast Louisiana Cajun musician is Vin Bruce, born in Cut Off in 1932. Bruce was born into a musical family. His father Levi was well known locally on the violin. It is said that Vin Bruce's grandfather was one of the two fiddleplayers the night in 1893 that the dance at Cheniere Caminada broke up early because of bad weather; that night half the town drowned, Bruce luckily not among them.

Vin Bruce first played with Dudley Bernard and the Southern Serenaders. Their drummer was Gatewood "Pott" Folse, yet another well known local personality.

In the 1950s, Vin Bruce was "discovered" by a talent scout for RCA while playing on a New Orleans radio show. A national tour, appearances on grand old opry, even a national fan club followed. His biggest hits were probably "Dans la Louisiane" and "Fille Du Village".

Vin Bruce's musical style is Country and Western, with lots of electric instruments, including pedal steel guitar. What makes it Cajun at all is the fact that the subject matters of his songs is often local, and that they are usually sung in French. In addition to original material, Bruce has recorded many covers of tunes by greats such as Hank Williams and Bob Wills, translated into French.

Leroy Martin of Galliano produced many of the Vin Bruce recordings, as well as that of another local artist, Joe Barry.

The style of Joe Barry, born in 1943, was Swamp Pop, a Louisiana variant of rock and roll. The artist from Cut Off sprung to fame with "I'm a fool to care" in 1961. He followed it up with other hits such as "Greatest Moments in My life"' and "Teardrops in My Heart".

Similarly, Claiborne Joseph "Joe Clay" Cheramie of Harvey pre-dated Elvis Presley by playing rockabilly of the Ed Sullivan show in the mid-fifties.

Of more obviously Cajun musical heritage are musicians like L.J. Foret of Houma, Pott Folse of Raceland, and Eugene Rodrigue of Lockport, all writing and recording original material in French. There are also novelty musicians, such as Cliff Fonseca with his his "Il y a pas des mouches sur moi" ("There are no flies on me"):

J'avais une vache caillette
Qu'a donne en masse du lait
Un beau jour mon mulet l'a fait peur
Asteur elle donne du beure

I had a milk cow
That gave a lot of milk
One lucky day my mule scared her
Now she gives butter

Bruce Daigrepont reports a new generation of Cajun musician in southeast Louisiana. Born in suburban New Orleans to parents who had moved there from Avoyelles Parish, Daigrepont became a professional at an early age and has been doing it full-time since 1980.

His primary instrument is the accordion, though he has experimented with other styles. He even recorded one Cajun tune with banjo. Daigrepont and his band play several times a week in New Orleans clubs, and at special events geared to tourists.

Weddings and Funerals.

"They had these wedding balls and as I said the man, the groom, kept his hat on which was the strangest custom I ever saw."

- THELMA DUPLANTIS

"That's the way people built their houses in the old days, I remember. When the tide was high they floated cypress logs to the side of the coteau by the trees. Then when a man wanted to get married he began cutting the wood for his house. He'd roll a log on a scaffold and use a saw to cut the boards. They'd make boards by hand....cut boards, sills, 2 X 4, all by hand. It took a long time sometimes 3 or 4 years." - ROBERT HEBERT

The marriage customs of the Cajuns had been well documented. Many of them are shared with other peasant peoples of European origin. Regardless, it is still worth noting a few of the most colorful here.

While gifts to the happy couple might well include the more conventional china, silverware, and home appliances, it is also likely that, before the wedding dance is over, the bride will be wearing a head dress of money. Bills are pinned directly to the bride's veil, usually in exchange for a kiss.

At Cajun weddings, any older brothers and sisters of bride or groom who are yet unmarried themselves are required to dance barefoot. Perhaps it is to remind them of the poverty that will await them in old age if they do not begin families of their own.

For widows or widowers remarrying, the charivari is performed. Friends and relatives congregate outside the couple's bedroom window on the wedding night, bang on pots and pans to make a racket, and don't go away till they have been invited in for cake and coffee.

Burial customs often involved elaborate rituals. One covered the coffin in black if the deceased had been old, with white used for the young. Two candles were used to illuminate the body,which was always placed with its feet towards the door. Clocks were stopped at the time of death. No work would be done in the house during the wake.

When the wake ended and people began to leave the house for the actual funeral, someone was always left at the house, for the house must be occupied until the body was safely buried. Along the route to the cemetaries, people would close doors, gates, and shutters, allowing no entry to wandering spirits. Cars stopped as the body passed, for respect, though perhaps also in fear of wandering spirits.

Politics

"If you wanted to be a schoolboard member, justice of the peace, or constable, or sheriff, you had so much money you spend on poll tax, say

I'd pay your poll tax cause you were too poor. You didn't give a darn, you were't going to spend that dollar, you had other needs for that dollar so you weren't going to register, well I'd pay your poll tax for you and of course I'd count on you election day to vote for me."

- T. P. PREJEAN

Politicians

Louisiana is perhaps infamous for its politics. Huey Long's antics captured the national press, as did his brother Earl. From Dick Leche to Edwin Edwards, the state's governors have been no strangers to the courtroom.

On the local level, politicians were even more colorful, if not more audacious. Each parish had its courtroom gang, many had their behind the scenes boss.

"Judge" Leander Perez (a native French speaker, the name notwithstanding) had an iron grip on one parish and a good hold on another. In the early forties, the governor challanged Perez's control by sending in the National Guard (in the middle of World War II!)

So the story goes, Perez moved the Parish seal and the documents necessary to conduct parish business onto a ferry boat and anchored it in the middle of the Mississippi. The attacking guardsmen had an army, but no navy. They blockaded the levee a while, them retreated to Baton Rouge. Perez returned to his courthouse and emerged even stronger after winning what the papers had begun to call, "The Little War".

Sheriffs, as chief of law enforcement and tax collector, have always been powerful in Louisiana. Country doctors often became sheriffs; they had the wealth, the contacts, and the people who owed them favors to command a lot of votes. Former St Landry Parish Sheriff Cat Doucet is probably the most legendary Louisiana sheriff for his exploits in keeping his own brand of peace, but others, like Udee Delcambre of Vermilion are certainly in the running.

Some sheriffs have become so powerful that no one dared run against them. There are stories of sheriffs arm-twisting deputies into running against them, for with no opposition it is hard to justify soliciting contributions.

Voting was often in blocks, by family. Store keepers, shrimp processors, fur buyers, indeed anyone who extended credit to the farmers, fishermen, or trappers, could lay fair claim to their votes.

Upland "redneck" populists like the longs had their counterparts in Cajun south Louisiana. Dudley "Couzan Dud" LeBlanc, gubernatorial candidate and pioneer advocate of Cajun ethnic pride, was not only figuratively a patent medicine saleman, that is how he literally made his fortune. His HADACOL, with lots of iron and alchohol, sold nationwide. To promote it, his Hadacol Caravan employed stars such as Hank Williams and Minnie Pearl.

A.O. "Uncle Rap" Rappelet of Lafourche was perhaps the archtypical south Louisiana politician, remembered more for some of his original strokes than for his populist platform. One man recalls as a child riding around with Rappelet from speech to speech. His job was to provide Uncle Rap with a fresh hankerchief with a fresh slice of onion at each stop, that he could better cry for the poor people.

His hourlong Sunday radio address from KLFT in Golden Meadow became an instituition. Each week it was a half hour in English followed by a half hour in French. On the last Sunday before a particularly heated election, however, Uncle Rap tried something different. His opponent had bought an hour of radio time right after Uncle Rap was to speak. Devirting severely from his norm, Uncle Rap spoke twenty minutes in English, twenty minutes in French, and finished by playing twenty minutes of recorded Italian opera. Few things, he calculated, could so greatly diminish the numbers who would wait to here his foe.

Uncle Rap's hat, mustache, and sun glasses became such a trademark that their silhouette and the words "HE IS BACK" were enough for posters announcing a late- career comeback candidacy. The signs didn't need his name; it could be no one else.

Camps

"They use to trap the, that was before nutria, trap muskrat and mink, otters, well all that fur, you know. They'd have campboats or camps out in the marsh and the whole family would go out there. The man, he'd bring in the furs and the women folks and the children would skin the animals and hang 'em out to dry."

- CASTRO MURRAY

The Camp.

The camp is an institution in Louisiana. It began with humble origins, as trappers' and oystermen's shacks. Occupations of the marsh required proximity, but it was not a place to live when there was not money to be made.

Temporary housing in the marsh, swamp, or woods was called a camp, even long after it developed a permanency contigent only on nature's storms. A variant was the camp boat, hauled home in the summer. It had the advantage that one's seasonal creature comforts were not tied to same trapping grounds year after year. Inland berths could be had that were considerably safer from hurricanes.

Long before improved transportation reduced their utility for working, camps came to be appreciated for their recreational value. Many a southeast Louisiana family's summer vacation was a week spent out on a shrimp drying platform.

Today camps range from elegant summerhouses to corrigated steel shacks hardly more sturdy that the palmetto huts of old. Some are beach front, others are actually built over the water. Near the coast, camps are built high on pilings, their stilts protecting them from hurricane water if not wind.

Perhaps the oddest site is when a mobile home is used for a camp, and raised ten feet into the air. Often it will get a porch, then a roof to keep it cool, then an addition, then a bigger porch, until the mobile home it started with is completely hidden.

Folk medicine

> You'd take medicine, you'd make a tea with grass of 'milo' or I don't know how to say it in English but it was a root that you'd boil and make a tea. They'd take elderberry leaves, you call it elderberry, if you had sunstroke they's put elderberry on your head and try to take out the fever. There was different cures like that. If you'd cut yourself bad they'd take spider webs, they'd twist it and put it on your cut. They thought it was the spider web that would stop the

bleeding but it, the web caused the blood to coagualate and it would clot. The web had something that helped clotting. Then you'd wash the cut with kerosene because it was the only disinfectant around.

- CLAUDE BOURG

REDNECKS, ROUGHNECKS AND THE BOSCO STOMP

The Arrival of the Oil Industry in the Marais Bouleur

Barry Jean Ancelet

Oil was discovered in Louisiana in 1900 just north of Jennings in a bassière or low spot which came to be called the Evangeline Oil Field. This discovery was made by drillers and developers spilling over from a similar field on the East Texas prairie called Spindletop. Almost immediately speculators began looking for other low spots on the prairie to sink their wells. One of the places they tried was another low spot between Mire and Cankton, just north and west of the corner where Acadia, Lafayette and St. Landry parishes meet. A single successful well was first drilled near Bristol, in 1927, but subsequent drilling in that immediate area turned up dry. In 1932, Superior Oil Company discovered oil on Ophy Hernandez's land near Bosco. Soon after, wells on Isrenhausen, Larcade and Melancon lands came in. These were the beginnings of what became known as the Bosco Oil Field. The oil industry had a major impact on the area's residents. At the same time, some area residents eventually made something of a mark on the oil industry. In this presentation, I would like to explore the relationship between oil and culture among the Cajuns, specifically the area around the Bosco Oil Field. In order to understand the effects of oil on the area, it is important to consider the context.

The Bosco oil field was located on the edge of a region traditionally called the Marais Bouleur, a Cajun French expression meaning "marsh bully." According to local tradition, Bosco is from boscoyo or "cypress knee" which was the nickname of a humpbacked resident of the area. Like most communities the Marais Bouleur had its share of ordinary law-abiding citizens, but as its name implies, the area was better known for some of its residents who were reputed for their toughness and love of fighting, and in particular for their prowess at knife fighting. Descriptions of these fighters sound like the popular idea of wild west outlaws. According to popular lore, they were easily recognized, usually dressed in long black coats, with tall dark hats on their heads and red handkerchiefs around their necks. They are said to have hung their coats and hats on their knives which they stuck in the walls and support posts upon entering buildings. [Think about this: you need a pretty hefty knife to hold up a coat and hat.]

The region's oral tradition teems with stories of memorable duels and feuds. A fierce (stubborn) sense of frontier pride was at the base of most scraps. Most legendary fighters are described as "not having a reverse gear." The motto of the Venable family, for example, was "Die maybe, back never." And they didn't have to bump into much to get things going. Many fights began with as little as one person accidentally stepping on another's toes or one couple bumping into another on the dance floor. As dance hall owner Ellis Richard put it, "Anything, man, anything. If someone walked on your toes, you didn't walk on his. You punched him, right there, and then the fight started." House dances and dance halls in the area were plagued with gangs of ruffians whose amusement consisted in breaking up such social engagements by starting fights with other participants. And if they found no takers among the locals, they fought among themselves.

Anything to disrupt the evening. The goal was to cause enough trouble to force the owner of the house to call off the dance. This was called casser le bal and considered the crowning achievement of a night out for the Marais Bouleur ruffians. For a time, they were so successful that the closest dance halls which were able to stay open were as far away as Esta Hebert's in Ossun and Gerard Forrestier's east of Vatican. Sully Babineaux opened his place in Mire when he could.

After a particularly harrowing series of fight stories, I asked Felix Richard why in the world they would do such things. He answered simply, "Because they liked that. There wasn't much to do in those days. No radio. No television. The only fun you had was what you made for yourself. And there's was fighting. They liked that."

One of the aspects of frontier life was a strong macho character. Although women carried their fair share of the workload and even more, often worked in the fields as well as in the homes, men usually performed the high visibility chores. Men also performed socially. Being visibly tough and independent was an important part of being a man on the frontier. Public displays of physical prowess had two basic forms which were closely related. One obviously involved successfully beating up others. The other involved receiving a licking with honor, which meant simply that a third party must intervene to save a fighter from being killed since he would not retreat on his own.

Not all fighters shared the same sense of honor, however. Nor were all men tough. Tough men need either worthy or numerous opponents. Stories about the Marais Bouleur who beat up dozens of men at a time are only possible because there were dozens of not so tough men around to beat up. Some of these sought and exacted revenge in a way that is just as characteristic of frontier cultures. Like Lapin, the amoral Louisiana French version of Brer Rabbit, some smaller men fought back with a wily though ruthless sense of frontier justice. A certain Mr. Guilbeau was small but famous for his unerring aim with an empty bottle. His son was as small but managed to escape a sound beating by a larger opponent and his friends on one occasion by plucking one of his adversary's eyes out and tossing it to the ground with the announcement that the fight was now over. A Mr. Leger is said to have slit his enemies' stomachs open as he walked quietly past them in a crowd.

The relationship between tough men and their women is an important part of the social structure of the _Marais Bouleur_. As Darwin noticed, the survival of the fittest factors into courtship in an important way. Ellis Richard put it another way: "Those were days when men were men and women loved them for it." Until modern concerns such as education and money begin to figure into the equation, older concerns such as strength and the ability to survive tend to remain important. [I don't want you, or them, to get the wrong impression here. I don't mean to malign the _Marais Bouleur_ (God forbid) by comparing it to primitive societies. Yet contemporary society undeniably has the threads of the past running through it. Let's compare them to the heroes of Golden Age Greece or the Knights of the Round Table instead. The rule stands: The man who won the war won the woman.] Typically, upon entering a house dance or dance hall, a _Marais Bouleur_ might exclaim, "_Je suis le meilleur homme dans la place_" (I'm the best man in the place), and then set about to prove it in his way to any who expressed disagreement or even doubt.

The most impressive stories describe what was called la bataille aux mouchoir, in which one would take one corner of his handherchief, sometimes in his teeth, and offer the other corner to his opponent. If the opponent accepted the tacet terms of this offer, he took the corner and they both pull out their knives and set to carving on each other without letting go of the handkerchief until one gave up or gave out. Sometimes it was impossible to fight immediately, because of the presence of a strong constable, like Martin Weber or later Joe Hanks, or because the owner of the dance hall was tougher than the would-be fighters and interested in keeping the peace. In those cases, a rendez-vous was set, usually for Sunday after mass. In good dueling tradition those involved in the altercation would meet with their seconds and any friends who cared to watch and they would settle their scores with bare knuckles, knives or even pistols. Sometimes individual fights became family affairs. Family fueds could occasionally result in full-blown battles, like the one between the Bearbs, the Duplechins and the Higginbothams. They met at Maurice Richard's race track and fought it out with black powder rifles. According to oral tradition, the families had to stop shooting at one point because there was so much smoke they couldn't see the enemy.

Another important factor in the social structure of the Marais Bouleur was the protection of turf, a trait common to many traditional societies from New York's West Side to San Francisco's Chinatown, especially in the affairs of courtship and marriage. As far back as primitive times, societies have applied pressure to keep outsiders out so that insiders will have a clear shot at the women of their area. Some residents of the *Marais Bouleur* apparently took it upon themselves to keep out interlopers from the neighboring regions. Informants point to frequent fights between the *Marais Bouleurs* and visitors primarily from the Pointe Noire, Sunset, *Coulée Croche*, Ossun, Scott, and Rayne. (So you can see they were quite busy.) Again, Ellis Richard: "When the people from the *Marais Bouleur* met up with the people from *Coulée Croche*, man, the ground was covered with hair." This phenomenon is also well known in other areas, such as Evangeline Parish where the folks from *L'Anse aux Pailles*, *L'Anse des Belair*, Mamou, and Ville Platte, had similar trouble getting along with each other.

It's important to note, as I make a transition toward the arrival of the oil industry in the *Marais Bouleur*, that these stories about the area coincide with many other general descriptions of late 19th century western life. The *Marais Bouleur* was on the edge of the prairies and life on the prairies was hard. Many of the residents extracted a meager living by the hardest, straining low-lying grazing land to produce cotton, corn and sweet potatoes. They remained relatively isolated from modern conveniences and civilizing influences associated with more urban settlements. Churches were few and far between. Public education, though ostensibly available and even mandatory beginning in 1916, was ignored when parents needed their children to help in the fields. Even dance halls and other such informal socializing influences were hard pressed to take root in the hostile conditions I described above.

Now that I've given you a little background on the area, let's explore what the arrival of the oil industry meant to the area. First, we should remember that, until very recently, oilfield workers were exclusively men. Like workers in some other adventure-oriented male-only occupations (cowboys, sailors, miners, explorers), they were characterized by expressive machismo. They were tough and liked to prove it. We should also consider that the workers who developed the Bosco oil field were Anglo-Americans primarily from Texas and Oklahoma, who didn't speak French. The injection of this foreign element into an environment which did not even tolerate neighboring fellow Cajuns would seem an obvious problem. As my uncle Clence Ancelet put it: "Men who liked to drink and fight arrived in an area full of men who already liked to drink and fight and hated outsiders on top of the bargain. You would have thought it would be like adding plenty of sparks to plenty of gas. But it really wasn't too bad." Oddly enough, most informants agree.

There were some clashes at first. Some fights broke out in the boom town line of bars and houses of ill-repute which sprouted along the region's main road. As Alcée Thibodeaux put it, "Those people from outside were pretty rough...pretty rough, but those old Cajuns from around here... You had to be careful. Nobody could walk on their toes." Felix Richard and Clence Ancelet corroborate this impression with the same expression, "At first it was pic-et-poc." Yet as Mrs. Thibodeaux insisted, "Nobody really got hurt. They were just trying each out."

There were occasional clashes between the industry itself and the people. None of the residents had ever seen an oil well or any of the support equipment, so it took a while before they learned their way around. The oil workers also had to learn their way around the Marais. In one instance, when one of the first wells came in, neighbors stopped by after mass to take a look. The oil workers saw an opening for a little practical joke and sprayed the ladies with some of the sludge from the top of the derrick. They did not anticipate the reaction of the husbands who climbed the derrick and beat them soundly on their own turf.

Another widely told story is about Onezime Melançon, a landowner who leased his land to a local grocery store owner turned landman named Isidore Prejean from nearby Cankton. Now, Zim was uneducated, but neither ignorant nor timid. When he showed his lease papers to one of his children, proudly declaring that he had negotiated a lease for his land, the child commented, "Yes, but according to this, you signed away all of your share of royalties for any oil that might be found on your land." "Oh no, I didn't," Zim shot back. He visited Prejean with loaded shotgun, and was thus able to negotiate a revision of the lease which even included a bonus of $750.

There were occasional scraps. Yet the full-blown war one might have anticipated never materialized. Several solid reasons for this emerge from my initial interviews with some of the people who lived through those tough times. First the outsiders presented no real threat to courtship. The Anglo oil workers were described as "hard drinkers, but no dancers." Further, many of them were already married and most of those who did seek female companionship were not interested in anything permanent and took advantage of the facilities along the boom town row.

More importantly the positive financial impact on the area went a long way toward tempering what might otherwise have been a delicate situation.

The most obvious influx of money was to the landowners. Unlike in most other countries, Americans own the rights to minerals on or under their lands. Landowners were able to lease the use of their lands for a negotiable fee. Later if oil was found, they also received royalties, if they didn't sign away their rights in the lease. Land men worked as intermediaries between the oil company and the landowners. They leased rights for a fee and were in a position to encourage the company to drill on the lands they controlled. The game was to give a land man enough to interest him in working for you while retaining some rights for yourself in case the company struck oil. Many of the people in the Marais Bouleur were subsistance farmers. The little money they saw came once a year when they sold their crops. They immediately spent it all paying their bills and then went back into debt for another year. With a successful well, some families literally became rich overnight. In order to play this game, however, you had to own land.

Many farmers had lost their lands by over-borrowing, and became sharecroppers, giving one-third of their earnings to the landowners if they owned their own mules and tools, or half if equipment and stock was provided. With the arrival of the oil field, these hard workers were able to make a regular salary for the first time in their lives. Though its first supervisors, drillers and crews were Anglo-Americans from the outside, Superior Oil Company quickly began hiring local folks for what Armany Sonnier called "the rough work." Even those who had made a little extra money before as day laborers (picking cotton or digging potatoes) were shocked at the money that was paid in the oilfield. As a young man, Clence Ancelet had made ten cents an hour working in the Ossun potato kiln. Then he got a job in Bosco digging pipeline by shovel for thirty-five cents an hour. He comments, "I didn't know what to do with all that money." Louis Prejean and Simon Gilbert, who got jobs as roustabouts, found themselves earning seventy-five cents an hour. While these salaries seem impossibly small today, it should be remembered that this was 1932 during the depths of the Great Depression.

Soon enough, the hardest workers impressed their bosses and rose in the company. Though a lack of education prevented some from attaining supervisory positions, a few overcame even the looming obstacle of illiteracy to become crew foremen. Born in 1912, Alcée Thibodeaux was a young man when the field was first developed. He had no formal education at all and bore traces of his Marais Bouleur ancestry. "I didn't look for trouble," he explained, "but if you looked for me, you found me." He first broke into the oilfield working in a mud plant for twenty-five cents an hour. He was later hired by Superior as a roustabout and eventually worked his way up to become a roughneck and even a driller. "It was hard, though," he insists. "I had to fight it. I had no education so I had to learn everything by heart."

Though salaries were relatively good, conditions were sometimes less than ideal. Informants invariably describe the work as hard. Mr. Thibodeaux describes working outside all day no matter what the weather. "If you were sent out on a job, they dropped you off and that was it. You didn't know when they would come back to pick you up. Rain or shine. You had to take your lunch bucket with you and tie it to a fence to keep the ants out. And you had half an hour for lunch. If it was cold, you would eat your little sandwich against one of the tanks, out of the wind. If it rained, you had to wear your slicker suit, if you had one, and eat your sandwich in the rain." The work was also dangerous. Some lost limbs and even their lives when they were caught in the machinery they were trying to control. Yet the road through Bosco was filled each morning as crew foremen picked day laborers.

Some of the benefits of the oil industry were indirect. Superior was apparently good to its employees and hosts alike. The company built houses for its principal workers. It also provided free natural gas for workers and landowners. [In those days, natural gas pressure was sometimes used to drive well pumps. It was otherwise burned off or given away.] The company was also good for the general economy. Service industries, including specialized labor crews such as boardroaders and concrete gangs, as well as support industries, such as grocery stores, bars and restaurants, emerged as a result of the money which flowed in the area. When oil companies began looking for oil in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Louisiana, they drafted many of the workers who had learned how to make wells work on land. These workers helped reinvent the industry to make it work offshore.

Life became a little easier. Men who got jobs in the oil field were able for the first time to buy their wives a few modern conveniences, such as sewing machines and ringer washers. Many families were able to buy their first radios, refrigerators and automobiles. And as they acquired trappings of modern society, the former fighters of the _Marais Bouleur_ began to lower their dukes. No longer required to work in the fields, children were able to stay in school and the education they received seemed to rebound upwards toward their parents, acting as a socializing factor. Entering the mainstream was not entirely without its drawbacks. The French language, for example, was one of the early casualties as childen of the first generation to go to school were often unable to speak to their own grandparents. Nor did everthing change overnight. The remnants of old habits persist even today. [Present day residents of the _Marais Bouleur_ do not have to announce their neighborhood watch policy with signs.] Yet, for better or worse, the Marais Bouleur wandered into the twentieth century in 1932, bypassing most of the 18th and 19th centuries, when the oil industry helped to break the feudal system called sharecropping.

There were other mitigating circumstances which began to open south Louisiana in general and along with it the Marais Bouleur about the same time. Free textbooks began to make education viable in the region. Roosevelt's CCC camps and later the draft brought many young Cajuns out into the rest of the country and the world. Cars and paved roads allowed traffic into and out of south Louisiana. Radio and later television provided a connection to the outside. But much of this activity was fueled by the oil which flowed from places like the _Marais Bouleur_.

THE RENAISSANCE OF POETRY IN LOUISIANA: CULTURAL REFLECTIONS

David Barry

[The following is a translation of the article submitted with thereport, "La Renaissance potique en Louisiane: reflets culturel."The excerpts of poetry are given in the French, followed by an English translation.]

Apart from a few rare poems and the transcription of some tales in the Comptes rendus de l'Athénée louisianaie in New Orleans, the end of the 19thcentury witnessed the demise of a written French language literature inLouisiana. At the time, this literature came from the aristocratic Creole society and those other social groups at the base of this neo-colonial social structure. Much like other literatures in the same social and cultural situation, the artistic eye turned towards the fatherland, the French esthetic in creativity which had been belatedly adopted in the colonies and poorly imitated in their literary works. Whatever criticisms may be made about the general quality of these works, these texts do reflect a unified vision of social reality as well as the linguistic myth of a homogeneous French langauge in Louisiana. Aside from the few folkloric slave tales and some poems written by free men of color in New Orleans, the appearance of a homogeneous language was perpetuated for nearly 80 years. If one admitted to the existence of other variants of French in the region, they were considered tobe "patois", or "bad French" or "Negro French" which could not be written. Therefore, literature, and indirectly culture, disappeared with the Colonial French of the old, aristocratic families.

This loss and the implicit inferiority of French still spoken today in Louisiana anchored itself slowly in the collective psyche of the Cajuns, the descendants of the original Acadian "Displacement" and subsequent immigrations. For more than 75 years, a people slumbered in illiterate silence, preoccupied only with linguistic and cultural survival, isolated fromthe external world. French became the language of a closed-in, closely knit community, rooted in the prairies and bayous of Louisiana. But the language had always existed in this way among the small, poor farmers of the area. Confronted with the encroachment of American culture and language during the 1930's, the culture and language of the Cajuns found itself ridiculed and devalued. The inferiority was long standing; the feeling of shame was deep; the pressure of the melting pot was strong. As a young Cajun poet so eloquently states:

Pourquoié crire
Personne va lire.
Tu perds ton temps
A cracher dans le vent.
La posie, c'est grand,
Pas pour les enfants,
Ni les illettrés,
Ni les acculturés. [Jean Arceneaux, "Combustion Spontane"]

[Why write
No one will read.
You waste your time
Spitting in the wind.
Poetry is for adults
Not for children,
Nor illiterates,
Nor the uncultured.] [J.A., "Spontaneous Combustion"]

Young Cajuns fifteen years ago had only two choices: assimilate into the American lifestyle, that is live in English, or remain ignorant and dispossesed in one's own land. Even though CODOFIL

[Council for the Development of French in Louisiana] was established in 1968 to teach French in the elementary schools of the State, educational reality caused them to turn, once again, to France, Belgium and Quebec for teachers. The reality of French spoken in Louisiana still did not have a place in the schools. How can one teach a language that can't be written? Is it really French? And even if it is French, it had deteriorated to the point that it had to be replaced by "good French"! Many Cajuns themselves fell into this rhetorical trap. Frère Moreau wrote:

On attend beaucoup des Cadiens qui dit,
"Je parle pas le bon francais."
Et ein tas de professeurs
Qui aiment pas des étudiants
Qui parlent ce bâtard. [Frère Moreau, "Le Bon Francais"]

[One hears alot of Cajuns say,
"I don't speak good French".
Alot of teachers
Who don't like students
Who speak this bastardized French.] [F.M., "Good French"]

In 1978, a handful of young people who each felt individually a need to express themselves and their culture got together for a performance, *Paroleset Musique,* organized in Lafayette by CODOFIL, to read their poetry. They had all scratched down, in hiding, their hopes, fears and anger, but the future did not look promising.

En 1968, la Louisiane a été officiellement
déclaré un état bilingue.
Et quoi c'est que
a veut dire?
a veut dire que quelque part à Bâton Rouge,
Signé, timbré, enterré dans un dossier,
Il y a un papier qui dit
Qu'en 1968, la Louisiane a été
officiellement déclare un état
bilingue. [Jean Arceneaux, "Un tat bilingue"]

[In 1968, Louisiana was officially
declared a bilingual state.
What does that mean?
That means that somewhere in Baton Rouge,

Signed, sealed and buried in a folder,
There is a paper which says
That in 1968, Louisiana was
officially declared a
bilingual state.] [J.A., "A Bilingual State"]

This first creative surge pushed young Louisiana poets to two discoveries, or more precisley two rediscoveries. First, wanting to re-evaluate their heritage, culture and language for so long deprecated, they became aware ofthe unsuspected richness of the Cajuns' past. For generations, a long oral tradition had maintained the customs, values and popular traditions which many of the young had heard of without being totally aware of their innate value. Carol Doucet writes:

Il y a chez ma mère une vieille armoire
Qui a entendu bien des histoires,
Qui a entendu les voix de mes grands-parents,
Qui a entendu les cris et les rires d'enfants.
Son tiroir gigantesque garde ses secrets.

On y a mis linge, souliers, jouets.
Cette armoire a entendu la voix de mon père
Et on peut le croire, de mes frères et de ma mère.
De cette armoire, de ce vieux bois,
On n'entend pas la voix.
A beaucoup de souvenirs l'armoire est fidèle,
Mais, à moi, elle me parle, elle. [Carol Doucet, "L'Armoire"]

[There is at my mother's an old armoire
Which has heard many stories,
Which has heard the voices of my grandparents,
Which has heard the tears and laughter of children.
Its gigantic drawer keeps its secrets.
People have put clothes, shoes, toys there.
This armoire heard the voice of my father
And, I can believe, of my brothers and mother.
From this armoire, from this old wood,
One can not hear a voice.
To many memories the armoire is faithful,
But, to me, she speaks, she does.] [C.D., "The Armoire"]

This return to the sources of Cajun heritage, retracing the flow of time, followed in the footsteps of a recent revival of Cajun music. Some of the new poets were themselves musicians, like Kenneth and

Richard; others were inspired by the musicality of old songs, like those of Iry Lejeune which were published in the first little collection of Louisiana poetry, Cris sur leBayou, in 1980. Here is an example:

Hé, 'tite fille!
Moi, je me vois
Après partir
Mais m'en aller donc te rejoindre.
Oh, chère 'tite fille,
Quand même tu voudrais
T'en revenir, petit monde,
'garde donc, je veux plus te voir.
Hé! Tu m'as dit.
'tite fille, criminelle,
Tu sais toi, tu voulais plus
M'aimer, malheureuse.
Tu connais, 'tite fille,
Que moi, j'ai pris ça dur,
Pris ça assez dur
Que moi, j'ai pris les grands chemins.

[Iry LeJeune, "La valse de pont d'amour"]

Such sad songs, painful in the cry of the singer and obsessive in therepeated rythms, provoked a poetic reaction such as this little poem of JeanArceneaux:

Un cri amer,
Bye-bye peine,
Bye-bye misère,
Bye-bye semaine.
C'est pas dur àdire
Quoi faire ils ont pas lâché.
ça aide à rire
Quand on devrait pleurer. [J. Arceneaux, "A la musique"]

[A bitter cry,
Bye-bye hurt
Bye-bye misery
Bye-bye week
It's not hard to say
Why they didn't give up.
It helps to laugh
When one should cry.] [J.A., "To music"]

Certain poets rediscovered their Cajun past through family ties. Genealogical roots became, in these cases, the source of individual pride which was linked to prior generations back to the arrival of the Acadians, otherwise alienated by the contemporary world. Living a devaluated reality, the young Cajun could not only rediscover his family heritage, but was also able to justify ethnic feelings through the strength of the past. Usually, the poet describes "the good old days" as simple, peaceful and satisfying compared to the ambiguity and lost felt in the present. In other circumstances, one might say this is too nostalgic or romantic. But the majority of young Cajuns had known this atmosphere in the lives of older relatives. Let us cite Sylvain de la Foret:

D'une bonne heure,
ya encore des étoiles d'hors.
Dedans,
le vieux drip *le café,*
la vieille fait des biscuits.
Après cinquante ans,
toujours la même routine,
toujours le même plaisir.

[Sylvain de la Fret, "Le Réveil"]
[At an early hour
the stars were still out.
Inside
the old man dripped the coffee,
the old woman made biscuits.
After fifty years
always the same routine
always the same pleasure.] [S.F., "Awakening"]

This same strength of age is found also in Nature.

terrain d'énergie
venue travers plusieurs
siécles d'envoyage
de force lente
et patiente faire
tentacules d'humus
d'humidité de lourd ciel
gonflé d'eau
caverne comme
au fond de la mer

[Zachary Richard, "Poème Aux Grands Chênes Verts"]

[land of energy
coming across many
centuries of sending
a slow force
and patient to form
tentacles of humus
the sky heavy with humidity
swollen with water
a cavern as if
at the bottom of the sea] [Z.R., "poem to the great oaks"]

As in every other agricultural society, the Cajun defines himself in relationship to Nature and finds in this a stability and a life cycle qui becomes his own. Clearing the land, hunting wild animals, fishing for shrimp and crawfish, the Cajun regulates his life according to seasonal work and accepts the interminable rythm of Nature as a constant coming and going.

...
Cette vieille charrue avait d'habitude
Fendre les rangs.
Elle a glissé des milles et des milles
Derrière les chevaux
Et les mulets de mon oncle
La terre sortait brun foncé et fraiche.
On entendait à peine
Les sabots des chevaux,
Le palonnier et les brides.
[Carole Doucet, "La Charrue"]

[This old plough had the habit
of splitting open the rows.
She slid miles and miles
behind the horses
and the mules do my uncle.
The dirt came up dark brown and fresh.
One barely heard
the shoes of the horses,
the reins and the bridal.] [C.D., "The Plough"]

There is in this habit of sowing and reaping in a systematic way a dedication of the people who inspire the young Cajuns today which is a hereditary power.

Everything which is seen in the past is not, however, joyful. The poetic inquiry into traditions by several poets falls back on the characteristics of collective inferiority, such as the Catholic Church. Without saying it openly as in Quebec, an implicit criticism of the shame felt by the people is attributed to religious traditions. The priest held the key of spiritual authority and turned their backs on their parishoners.

Quel malheur de parler une langue qui est
impuissante de faire des miracles.
Nos jeunes prêtres acadiens de Louisiane s'en
vont à Rome en pélérinage pour voir le pape. Un
pape qui leur parle, bien sûr, dans la lange des
Acadiens. Et nos jeunes prêtres, la fleur de notre
jeunesse, le regardent avec des yeux perplexes
d'incompréhension.
Le pape parle toutes les langues, mais nos jeunes
prêtres ne parlent méme pas la nôtre.

[Emile DesMarais, "Hors de l'anglais, point de salut"]

[What bad luck to speak a language which is
impotent in making miracles.
Our young Acadian priests from Louisiana
go away to Rome on a pilgrimage to see the Pope.
A pope who speaks to them, of course, in the
language of the Acadians. And our young priests,
the flower of our youth, look at Him with
perplexed eyes of incomprehension.
The Pope speaks all languages, but our young
priests don't even speak our own.]

[E.D., "Outside of English, no Salvation"]

A last group does not have its origins in Louisiana soil, but roots itself in the past by a choice of acculturation. Foreign French-speakers or Americans find themselves in a past which they grasp through a reflex, not reflection. For them, culture and area make up a whole that they choose to be, and for which the recipe is available to all. Isabelle Teche discovers the secret of this tradition which has made her a Cajun in her poem, "Cajun Gumbo":

Quoi c'est ça?
Explique-moi.
D'abord, tu prends un pays;
Le ventre troué du Mississippi,
Ensuite, écoute:
Un peu de Bretons,
De Normands, de Berrichons,
Tu remues longtemps,
Tu écrases les grumeaux,
Et puis:
Un peu d'Allemands,
Remue encore:
Un peu d'Espagnols,
Tourne fort.
Laisse reposer.
Et puis, goûte:
C'est pas encore a?
Alors, attends un peu,
C'est là que le goût viendra,
Peu peu, en douceur,
en douleur,
secrétement.

[What's that?
Explain to me.
First, you take a country;
The riddled stomach of the Mississippi,
Then, listen:
A few Britons,
Normans and Berrichons,
You stir for a long time,
You break up the lumps,
And then:
A few Germans,
Stir some more:
A few Spanish,
Stir rapidly.
Let it stand.
And then, taste:
It's not quite right?
Well, wait a little,
That's when the flavor comes,
Little by little, slowly,
painfully,
secretly.]

Whatever the point of access to the past, all the young Louisiana poets pass through. It is their common point, their spiritual baptism in the bayou waters which defines them and gives them the right to speak. The poet becomes a speaker for linguistic and cultural values of the Cajuns. To write is therefore an assurance of the continuity of the past, an individual voyage in the bosom of traditions and an uninterrupted starting point for the future.

These are the discoveries of the Cajun poet; we now have to describe the second part: the conflicting ambiguity of the present and the problem of survival for the future. Without exception, the young poets situate themselves solidly in reality and commit themselves to describing it, sometimes going beyond it. It is a question of cultural awareness for which the means of expression is the language. The framework for this activity is common to all, but the actual expression is intimate and personal. Some traits can be discovered through themes found in the poetry, but the true magnitude is only found in the poetic language each poet uses. Language itself becomes the form and the content of the creative act.

Mes amis et moi
ces maudits mots
se rencontrent
beaucoup trop.
Mais ils sont tout ce qui reste
ils me consolent
ils me caressent.

[Karla Guillory, "Maudits mots"]

[My friends and I
those damned words
meet
all too often.
But they are all that is left
they console me
they caress me.] [K.G., "Damned Words"]

So, these "damned words" are the battlefield and the weapons which the poet uses to carve out an image of the cultural problems of the Cajuns. It is not simply a question of how and what to write, but in what language. The reader finds, in these poems, the old questions of language values: Standard French, Cajun French, Creole. The choice of a word is a commitment, a risk, a conflict. What word to choose?: "je vais", "j'vas", "mo va"? How do you write a language which is only oral? What risks does one run when confronted by the empty page?

C'est nécessaire dire:
"Je vais," plutôt que "Je vas,"
"Près de," plutôt que "au ras"
"Beaucoup," plutôt que "un tas."
Un tas de monde oublie le "ne" avec le "pas."
Ecoute, c'est:
"Attendre," pas "espérer,"
"Pleurer," pas "brailler,"
"Penser," pas "jongler."
Je pense que t'as jamais jonglé de ça

...
Tu me demandes quo'faire
Tout ça, c'est ncessaire.
Juste jongle comment vaillant ça serait,
Si tu rencontrais un vrai Français.
[Degàt, "Lecon du bon français"]

[It is necessary to say:
"Je vais" not "Je vas"
"Prés de" not "au ras",
"Beaucoup" not "un tas".
Alot of people forget the "ne" with the "pas".
Listen, it is
"Attendre" not "espérer"
"Pleurer" not "brailler"
"Penser" not "jongler"
I bet you never thought of that.
You ask me why
All of that is necessary.
Just think a minute how great it would be
If you should ever meet a "real" Frenchman.]
[D., "A Lesson in Good French"]

The old conflict between good and bad French comes out in the ironic poem of Dégat. It would be simple if it were a simple question of "yes" or "no" between one word or another. On first reading a poem on this subject, like the preceeding, the choice of the poet seems clear, but the thematic level is often misleading. The dilemma of language is present for the writer in each line, each word. The choices have to be constantly made and linguistic divisions are never exact or pure. Everything comes back to, not only questions of two abstract linguistic realities - Good and Bad French, but the specific linguistic reality of each poet: his/her internalization of the French langauge, how the language was learned and how to write down what is said.

> ...
> *Main c'est ces bons Français*
> *Qui manquent:*
> *...*
> *ça "se perd jamain comme des tchoques,"*
> *Ils ont pas "la tête dure pour faire ein gogo moux,"*
> *...*
> *A force la bonne Sainte Vierge doit pas brailler,*
> *La merde vole jamain,*
> *A force les bons temps roulent pas!*
> *Peut-être on parle pas le bon français*
> *Mais c'est bien simple:*
> *C'est l' plus gêné qui s'ertire.*
> [Frére Moreau, "Le Bon Français"]
>
> [But it is the good French
> Which are missing.
> They "never get lost in the wilds"
> They don't have "a hard head to make a soft butt"
> The good Virgin Mary can't bawl,
> The shit never flies,
> The good times never roll!
> Maybe we don't speak good French
> But it's simple:
> The embarassed back out.] [F.M., "Good French"]

This little passage cited from a poem by Frère Moreau shows the tremendous complexity of writing for young Louisiana poets. Moreover, one can not forget that they are confronting this problem, not as linguists or etmologists, but as writers and inventors of the language. For example, Frére Moreau makes choices, consciously or unconsciously, at many different linguistic levels in the same poem, often the same line. To illustrate, he makes a phonetic choice in writing "main" and "jamain" instead of "Mais" and"Jamais"; a choice of popular usage with "c'est" in place of "ce sont"; a lexical choice for a word that only exists in Cajun French "tchoque", a little black bird; a morphological choice through metathesis when he writes "s'ertirer" and not "se retirer"; an orthographic choice with "l'plus" instead of "le plus"; a choice of anglicismes with "shit flies" and "let the good times roll".

When the language problem is addressed only in French and to French-speakers, the linguistic phenomeon is already complicated. When the conclict is between English and French, a new dimension is added to the question of poetic creativity:

> Laissez le bon temps rouler,
> "These people really know how to have a
> good time!"
> Une race idyllique, sans souci,
> Des écrevisses, des patates et des culs de
> chaoui,
> Comme si on était toujours in the forest
> primeval
> Aprés se promener avec Mlle Bellefontaine
> En Acadie, home of the happy,
> Doux, doux, doux,
> Content, heureux, fout-pas-mal.
> Asteur, les Ragin' Cajuns
> Dépensent leur passion sur un billet
> d'entrée
> Pour voir une partie de football.
> Il nous restera bientôt

Que l'imitation grotesque
D'un peuple autrefois vivace,
Avec juste assez de traditions
Pour remplir les pages d'un tourist
brochure.
Le buddha *de Basile avait raison:*
The Good times are killing us all.
[Jean Arceneaux, "La nouvelle valse de samedi au soir"]

[Let the good times roll,
"These people really know how to have a
a good time!"
An idyllic race, without worries,
Crawfish, potatoes and coonasses,
As if we were still in the forest primeval
Walking along with Mlle. Bellefontaine
In Acadia, home of the happy,
Sweet, sweet, sweet,
Contented, happy, don't give a damn.
Now, the Rajun' Cajuns
Spend their passion on a ticket
To see a game of football.
Soon there will only remain
The grotesque imitation
Of a people at one time vivacious
With just enough traditions
To fill the pages of a tourist brochure.
The buddha of Basile was right:
The Good times are killing us all.]
[J.A., "The New Waltz of Saturday Night"]

This confrontation of languages and cultures is the one that seems the most menacing to the young Cajun poets and explodes the poetic language, shocks the ear, splits the poem apart while leaving the reader withan embarassed and uneasy feeling. The Cajun/American poems demand the linguistic rights of the people. As Jean Arceneaux say in another poem, it is a question of linguistic schizophrenia.

The reaction of each poet to this collective dilemma leads to a confrontation with the future. Here, the individual responses, as well as the language used to express them, distinguishes readily one poet from another:

Devenu étranger à ma propre langue,
Parler français, parler anglais
caméléon de culture,
c'est quoi, quoi c'est ça
la culture.
...
Dans toutes les langues
Du monde, tout l'monde
Criant d'une seule voix
"J'su que j'su."
Fin de la tyrannie.
Délivrance à la paix.
[Zachary Richard, "Pome Pour La Défense De La Culture"]

[Having become a stranger to my own language,
To speak English, to Speak French,
A cultural cameleon,
It's what, what is
Culture?
In all the languages
of the world, of all the world,
Crying out as a single voice,
"I am, I am".
The end of tyranny.
Deliverance and peace.]
[Z.R., "Poem for the Defense of Culture"]

or:

Et quand j'ai dit quelques mots en bon français,
Il s'a tourné ma femme et il a demandé,
"Quoi c'est qu'il a dit?"
Et quand j'ai parlé avec mes vieilles tantes,
Mes cousins et mon beau père,
C'était la même chose.
C'était moi, pas eux, en exil culturel.
Culturellement mort.
C'est là que j'ai commencé écouter pour bien parler.
Et quand mon vieux cousin m'a demandé au festival
de musique acadienne,
"Quoi c'est tu fais icitte? Tu te crois Cajun asteur?"
J'ai répondu sec, "Ouais, enfin."
[Antoine Bourque, "Le Cajun renouveau"]

[And when I said a few words in "good" French,
He turned to his wife and he asked,
"What did he say?"
And when I spoke with my old aunts,
My cousins and my father-in-law,
It was the same thing.
It was me, not them, in cultural exile.
Culturally dead.

That's when I began to listen to speak well.
And when my old cousin asked me at the Acadian music festival,
"What are you doing here? You think you're a Cajun now?"
I answered back, "Yep, finally."] [A.B., "The New Cajun"]

or:

Enfants du silence,
Levons nos voix ensembles.
Chantons du coeur en choeur,
Ils commencent nous entendre.
La marrée aémricaine
Commencée baisser
Après tant d'années
De nous avoir noyés
Par les fossés dans nos levées.
Il faut réclamer notre terre
Pour replanter nos rêves
Dans le fumier de nos peines.
Le soleil brille fort encore,
C'est la saison acadienne.
[Jean Arceneaux, "Enfants du silence, I]

[Children of silence
Raise our voices together
Sing from the heart in chorus
They're beginning to hear us.
The American marsh tide
Is beginning to ebb
After so many years
Of drowning us
By the holes in our levees.
We have to reclaim our lands
To replant our dreams
In the manure of our pains.
The sun shines brightly again,
It's the Cajun season.]
[J.A., "Children of silence I"]

or still:

Mo connais premier fois- à yé pelé mo créole
Yé dit pas parler ça
C'est di vilain moyèr
Yé reté tout quichoge, tout ça m'ol fait
Fait pas ça comme créole c'est di vilain moyr
Yé pas donné mo choix
Yé gain force, yé gain loi
Yé ça massacrer tout
pis déclarer toi fou

Mo suivi yé chemin
Mo té tracassée plein
Mo pas trouvé moyen
Vini bon 'méricain.
...
[Debbie Clifton, "Voyageur"]

[I know the first time I was called creole
They told me not to talk like that
It's ugly talk
They took everything, everything I did
Don't act like a creole, it's the ugly way
They didn't give me a choice
They had the force, they had the law
They massacred everything
Then called you crazy
I followed their road
I worried alot
But I didn't find a way
To become a good American. [D.C. "Voyager"]

Exile and alienation are the poetic realities in the contemporary works of Louisiana, but the fact that the act of writing is caught in the very material which is alienating causes each individual poet to define him/herself on the level of language. Although there is a linguistic generalization of the group, the poet struggles in an intimate personal linguistic battle field. The demands for ethnic equality are fought for in the word. French French, Cajun French, Creole: each one provides his own response. Il is evident, however, that it is no longer a question of linguistic homogeneity which had been proposed since the 19th century, but a multi-form expression which reflects the complex reality of cultures in Louisiana.

THE SURVIVAL OF FRENCH CULTURE IN SOUTH LOUISIANA

Barry Jean Ancelet

"What's your name? Where're you from? Who's your daddy?" When you first meet someone from South Louisiana, these are the questions you will probably hear. And you have to answer them before you can get along about your business. They are not rhetorical questions. They are quite serious and designed to elicit information which helps to place you in the world of the Cajuns and Creoles. If you're from the inside, they want to know where you fit. If you're from the outside, they want to know how you got in and why. Such concerns could be thought of as xenophobic, but they're not. They're simply part of a ritual to establish relationships among a people who have learned to be careful from a history of tragedy and turmoil. They function as boots for a people used to high water.

The French founded Louisiana in 1699. At first there were just a few forts perched precariously along the rivers of the frontier. Eventually, however, there developed a society of French colonials. Those born in the colony called themselves Creoles, a word meaning "home-grown, not imported," to distinguish themselves from immigrants. Between 1765 and 1785, the Acadians arrived in South Louisiana. Exiled after French Acadia became English Nova Scotia, they isolated themselves to reestablish their society along the bayous and on the prairies where they created a melting pot of their own. By the 19th century, the varied French cultures, enriched by the native American Indian tribes and immigrants from Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland, England, and the new United States, created a blend which came to be called Cajun. The descendants of African slaves added a few ingredients of their own and borrowed from the pot to improvise a language, a culture and an identity which they came to call Creole.

In 1803, when Napoleon sold Louisiana to Thomas Jefferson in the biggest real estate deal in history, the territory, which stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, was divided up by politicians. Artificial, arbitrary boundaries ignored cultural regions and historical settlement patterns. The new State of Louisiana included the piney hills of the north and east with English-speaking cracker farmers, the bayous and prairies of the south with French-speaking Cajun and Creole farmers, the rich alluvial plains along the Red and Mississippi Rivers with drawling aristocratic planters, and New Orleans with multilingual, multicultural urbanites.

When the time came for statewide laws, the very cultural and linguistic diversity which made for rich new blends put a strain on the state's arbitrary borders. Early versions of the state constitution made valiant attempts to legitimize the French language, but America charged on and the road signs to nationalism were all in English. By the turn of the century, the battlecry of U. S. President Theodore Roosevelt, "One nation, one language!" thundered across the land. The approach of World War I induced a quest for national unity which surpressed regional diversity. In 1916, mandatory English language education was made available to the rest of Louisiana and imposed in the south. Children were punished for speaking the language of their fathers and mothers in school. French was trampled in a frontal assault on illiteracy. Several generations of Cajuns and Creoles were eventually convinced that speaking French was a sign of cultural illegitimacy. Those who could joined the headlong rush toward the language of the future and of the marketplace, becoming more American than the

Yanks. All that came from the outside along with the English language was imitated and internalized. Western Swing replaced Cajun music in the dance halls. Black Creoles, who had preserved their language and traditions largely in isolation, became increasingly involved in the civil rights movement which they felt to be their most pressing struggle. The discovery of oil fueled an economic boom which brought both groups out of the 19th century just in time for the Great Depression. First shared by horse-drawn buggies and horseless carriages, Huey Long's new highways and bridges opened the countryside and linked the bayous and prairies of South Louisiana with the rest of America.

South Louisiana was humming down a newly paved road toward homogenization. But was this the right road? Stress cracks appeared on the social surface: alcoholism and suicide among musicians and artists; juvenile delinquency among children who could no longer speak to their grandparents because of the language difference and would no longer speak to their parents because of television; self-denigration among a people who now called themselves coonasses. Louisiana's French cultures were beating a fast retreat, bearing the stigma of shame.

Then, in the late 1940s, the tide seemed to turn, particularly among the Cajuns at first. Soldiers in France during World War II had discovered that the language and culture they had been told to forget made them invaluable as interpreters and made surviving generally easier. After the war, returning GIs, aching from foreign wars in faraway places, sank into the hot bath of their own culture. They drank and danced to forget. Dance halls throughout South Louisiana once again blared the familiar and comforting sounds of homemade music. The glowing embers of the Cajun cultural revival were fanned by political leaders like Dudley LeBlanc and Roy Theriot who used the 1955 bicentennial of the Acadian exile as a rallying point for the revitalization of ethnic pride (along with their own careers). The message of 1955 was that the Cajuns had survived the worst; their culture and language were injured but alive.

In 1968, the State of Louisiana officially fostered the movement with the creation of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), knighting former U.S. Congressman James Domengeaux its chairman. The message of 1968 was that it was officially all right to be Cajun again. But the movement was not without problems. CODOFIL found itself faced with the monumental task of creating a quality French language education program from scratch. Older Cajuns who had written "I will not speak French on the schoolgrounds" a few thousand times had learned the lesson well and avoided inflicting on their own children what was long considered a cultural and linguistic deficiency. The mandate of CODOFIL, as a state agency, covered the entire state, right up to its old artificial borders. For these reasons, CODOFIL was forced to water its wine and pressed for the establishment of French as a second language in the elementary schools. A dearth of native-born French teachers compounded the problem and CODOFIL opted to import teachers from France, Belgium and Quebec as a stopgap. This, along with a broad program of cultural exchanges, brought the Louisiana French experiment to the attention of the Francophone world. Meanwhile, activists on the home front felt that the indigeneous language and culture were once again forced into the shadows as many Cajuns dutifully echoed past criticisms, apologizing that their language was "not the real French, just broken Cajun French."

On the other hand, the Cajuns were no longer alone. For their own reasons, France, Belgium and Quebec became interested in fanning the fires of self-preservation along the bayous. They invested millions of francs and piastres to create a life-support system in the hopes that French culture and language might ultimately survive in South Louisiana. Along with money and teachers have come hordes of tourists eager to visit this long-lost, long-forgotten "exotic" place where, against all odds, French has somehow survived. This contact has shown the Cajuns that, contrary to their childhood lessons, their French works just fine to communicate with folks who speak "real" French. And with the gradual defusing of Jim Crow segregation, black Creoles are becoming increasingly interested in preserving the French parts of their culture.

Visitors to South Louisiana, for their part, invariably bring their own cultural baggage and eventually have to reassess their interests in the light of certain realities. Quebeckers who come to find a symbol of dogged linguistic survival in the North American context find virtually no open Anglo/Franco confrontation and a confounding absence of animosity in cultural politics. The French who seek quaint vestiges of a former colony find French-speaking cowboys (and Indians) in pickup trucks. They are surprised at the Cajuns' and Creoles' love of fried chicken and iced tea, forgetting this is also the South; at their love of hamburgers and Coke, forgetting this is America; at their love of cayenne and cold beer, forgetting this is the northern tip of the West Indies. American visitors usually skim along the surface, too, looking for traces of Longfellow's Evangeline and a lost paradise where past and present meet like the sky and water on the horizon.

To understand today's Cajuns and Creoles, one must take a long, hard look at their culture and history. Friendly, yet suspicious of strangers; easygoing, yet among the hardest nuts of all to crack; deeply religious, yet amusingly anti-clerical; proud, yet quick to laugh at their own foibles; unfailingly loyal, yet possessed of a frontier independence, Cajuns are immediately recognizable as a people, yet defy definition. As the saying goes, "You can tell a Cajun a mile away, but you can't tell him a damn thing up close." Black Creole culture is just as complex, involving more than the obvious confluence of African and French heritages. Before the Civil War, most black Creoles were slaves on French plantations, but others, called gens de couleur libres, held positions in the business and professional communities and sometimes owned their own plantations and slaves. Further, many generations of intermarriage with whites and native American Indians produced an intricate internal caste system within black Creole society based on skin tone, dialect and family history.

The most important constant in South Louisiana culture may well be an uncanny ability to adapt. Cajuns and Creoles have always been able to chew up change, swallow the palatable parts and spit out the rest. This selective adaptability has become indeed the principal issue of cultural survival in French Louisiana. Before, change was slow, organic and progressive. Now, much of it is imported at a dizzying pace. The fight to save the language looms large because many fear that if it is lost, the culture will go with it. Or can it be translated into English? To be sure, Cajuns and Creoles will eat gumbo and crawfish forever, but is "Jolie Blonde" sung in English still Cajun music? And where does Creole zydeco end and Afro-American rhythm-and-blues begin?

There are signs of renewed vigor. Young parents are speaking French to their children on purpose. Young authors are writing French on purpose. Louisiana teachers are replacing the foreigners. There have even been a few movies produced in French. Cajun music, once dismissed as "nothing but chanky-chank," has infiltrated radio, television and the classroom. Zydeco King Clifton Chenier, who recently brought home both a Grammy and a National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Award, has inspired a new army of black Creole musicians. With festivals and recording companies watering the roots at the local and national levels, young musicians are not only preserving the music of their tradition but improvising and creating new songs for that tradition.

Yet, while the French language struggles to maintain its role in the cultural survival of South Louisiana, there are changes in style which reflect modern influences. Young musicians would be less than honest if they pretended that they never listened to the radio. Thus, the sounds of rock, country and jazz are incorporated today as naturally as were the blues and French contredanses of old. Cajuns and Creoles are constantly adapting their culture to survive in the modern world. However, this change is not necessarily a sign of decay, as it was first thought. On the contrary, it is likely a sign of vitality. The early effects of Americanization were rightly considered drastic because it was too much too fast and the melting pot boiled over. The cooks of South Louisana culture have since regained control of their own kitchen and continue to simmer a gumbo of rich and diverse ingredients.

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